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THE HISTORY OF JENNINGS, LOUISIANA

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THE HISTORY OF JENNINGS, LOUISIANA

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

in

The Department of History

by

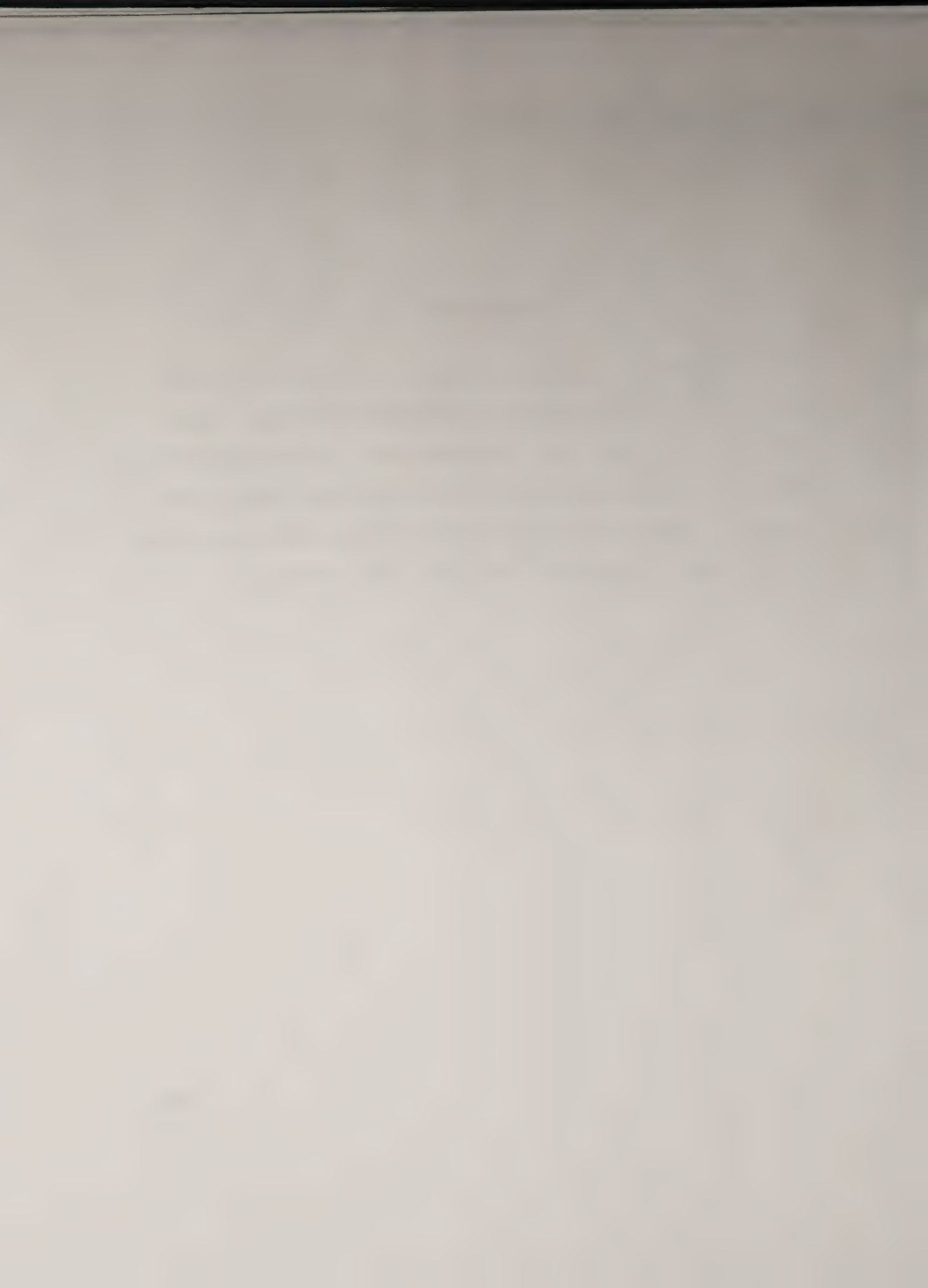
Henry LeRoy Riser  
B.A., Centenary, 1947  
August, 1948





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# MAP OF JENNINGS OIL FIELD

3. W.

2. W.



Jennings Times, April 24, 1902

Scale: 1 inch = 1 mile







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## ABSTRACT

The story of Jennings, Louisiana, is in the earliest phases, the story of "Father" Cary of the middle west. Through his efforts mid-western wheat farmers were induced to migrate to Jennings. The mid-westerner found the Acadians cultivating rice by primitive methods. The newcomers revolutionized the Acadian methods by introducing modern machinery and artificial irrigation. As a result, Louisiana supplanted South Carolina as a rice-growing center.

In 1901 alert Jennings businessmen brought in oil operators to develop the Jennings Oil Field. This marked the first production of oil in the state of Louisiana.

Oil became an important element in the economy of Jennings, but rice, the basis of the town's economy, was still cultivated. After 1906 oil production declined and the importance of the industry to Jennings decreased. Rice remained, as it always had been, the leading economic activity of the area.





## INTRODUCTION

The founding of Jennings was a manifestation of the dynamic spirit in Americans which led them to continually seek new frontiers and new areas of economic exploitation. The story of its growth parallels that of many other Louisiana towns, but in two respects it has a claim to distinctiveness: its middle western origin and its connection with Louisiana's oldest oil field.

Jennings borders the famous Teche country of Louisiana, which was settled and populated largely by the Acadians. These illustrious people of French descent traced their lineage back through the days of the French and English struggle for the new world. The story of their transplantation ranks as one of the most interesting in Louisiana history, but we are not able to deal with it here.

The Jennings area was settled in the main by wheat farmers of Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and other midwestern states. These settlers were predominately of Anglo-Saxon stock. It is interesting to observe how these two groups of people, the natives and settlers, lived together without friction as Americans, a situation diametrically opposed to the relations that existed between their respective ancestors during the struggle for the new world.

The new settlers of southwest Louisiana were referred to as "Yankees" by the natives. At first this term was not used in the presence





of the settlers for fear of offending them. On the other hand, the settlers knew the natives as "Creoles" and "Acadians", which was usually shortened to "Cajuns." It was shortly discovered that neither group objected to these popular nicknames and both the terms "Yankees" and "Cajuns" were used without fear of offense. Many of the natives were<sup>1</sup> unable to speak or understand English, but were very friendly.

The Acadians' houses were of substantial construction and usually located near the woods and bayous in order that a fuel and water supply would be easily available. The fireplace in most homes served as both heater and cookstove. All windows and doors were solid and the only lighting system was the use of homemade candles. These were manufactured of beef fat, melted and poured into molds. Schools of the natives were of short duration. Some families hired teachers to come into the home and tutor the children. The Catholic religion predominated.<sup>2</sup>

The natives grew rice, cotton, sweet potatoes and corn. Practically none of these crops were marketed, but instead were used privately and served in the barter system of economy that existed in the native settlements. Nearly all items used, including clothing and household goods, were manufactured at home. Mattresses were made of moss and feathers. The natives used a thin material similar to cheese cloth to cover their beds as a protection against mosquitos. They did not have the convenience of banking facilities and kept their surplus money at home,

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<sup>1</sup>

Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.

<sup>2</sup>

Jefferson Davis Parish Resources and Facilities (Baton Rouge, 1947), p. 11.





usually in the medium of twenty dollar gold pieces. There is no evidence of indebtedness among them.<sup>3</sup>

The Acadians proved to be good and helpful neighbors and gave appreciable aid to the settlers in homesteading and homemaking.<sup>4</sup>

The growth of Jennings has been continuous through the years. The community's enterprising residents loved the land and developed it to the fullest capacity. Through the alertness of its leaders,<sup>5</sup> it fostered the first oil well and oil field in the state of Louisiana. Oil brought a boom to the town but this was only a peak in its continuous growth. When oil production declined, the basic agricultural economy kept the town prosperous. Jennings did not become a ghost town.

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<sup>3</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.

<sup>4</sup> Agathine Goldstein, "Louisiana Town," Bienville Democrat, February, 1934, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Jennings Times, April 24





## Chapter I

### THE FOUNDING OF JENNINGS

Jennings, Louisiana, just a stop on the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1880, was settled by mid-western farmers in 1883, thus becoming a "Yankee" settlement deep in the "Cajun" country of southwestern Louisiana.

Jennings McComb, for whom the town was named, was a contractor on the Southern Pacific Railroad. He built the Jennings depot on a divide peculiar to southwest Louisiana.<sup>1</sup> It is known that he was president of the Louisiana Western Railroad Company and had been associated with Charles Morgan in certain railroad transactions. McComb accumulated a great fortune, not from the railroad transactions. McComb accumulated a great fortune, not from the railroad but from the acquisition of the patent for the arrow tie buckle used in the baling of cotton.<sup>2</sup>

At one time it appeared that McComb would give his surname to a town on the Louisiana Western Railroad, but the site chosen for McComb, Louisiana, failed to develop.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Louisiana Rice Book (n.p., 1901), p. 100. This is one of several books issued by the Passenger Department of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

<sup>2</sup> S.G. Reed, A History of Texas Railroads (Houston, 1941), p. 229.

<sup>3</sup> Jennings Semi-Weekly News, April 27, 1926. The impression that McComb, Mississippi, was named for Jennings McComb, while widely held, is erroneous. Actually the Mississippi town was founded by Col. Henry Simpson McComb, who was president of the New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern Railroad Company, which is now the main line of the Illinois Central System. This information was supplied by N. A. Coplin, Secretary-Manzger of the Chamber of Commerce, McComb, Mississippi, in a letter to Henry L. Riser, October 18, 1947.





Little is known of McComb the man, but tradition has it that he was capable of violent manifestations of temper. According to the son of "Father" Cary, Jennings' founder, McComb when provoked could be heard from the Mermentau River to the Grand Marais (a distance of ten miles),<sup>4</sup> or as the Acadians put it, "de Mentau to de Grand Maria."

The first settler in Jennings was A. D. McFarlain, who came from St. Mary Parish, in 1881.<sup>5</sup> This energetic young man was the community's first rice grower, first merchant, first postmaster, first brickmaker, and first builder.<sup>6</sup> McFarlain prospered with Jennings' growth and later became one of the town's most prominent business men and civic leaders.<sup>7</sup> He opened a store in Jennings in 1881 and although little is known of his activities until the arrival of "Father" Cary (1883), he probably carried on a very moderate trade with the neighboring Acadians. His later prominence as a property owner suggests that he took full advantage of the opportunity then existing of acquiring lands in the area for small sums and by homesteading.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Letter of C. C. Cary to L. E. Block, Secretary-Manager, Jennings Association of Commerce, March 26, 1947, in the possession of the Jennings Association of Commerce.

<sup>5</sup> S. L. Cary, History from Ancient to Modern (Jennings, 1913); Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934. McFarlain filed his homestead for 124 acres in Jennings at the Federal Land Office in New Orleans on July 8, 1876. A photostat of the abstract is held by the Eiber-Mayo Title and Guaranty Company.

<sup>6</sup> Cary, History from Ancient to Modern; Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix No. 3 for biographical sketch of A. D. McFarlain.

<sup>8</sup> Louisiana Rice Book, p. 100; Cary in his History From Ancient to modern states that land sold for \$1.00 an acre in 1888.



The most important personage in the early days of Jennings was<sup>9</sup> Sylvester L. Cary. His achievements were so great indeed as to merit for him designation as the town's founder and the affectionate title of "father." Until his arrival Jennings was only a name. Churches, schools, streets and other prerequisites of a community were non-existent.

Cary visited Jennings on the advice of the Louisiana State Com-<sup>10</sup>missioner of Immigration, William H. Harris. The reason "Father" Cary gave for his travel from Iowa was that he was "seeking a home where there<sup>11</sup> was neither winter or mortgages." According to Captian J. F. Merry, Cary's transportation from Iowa to New Orleans and return was advanced by the railroad. Merry states further that "Father" Cary in requesting the ticket promised to repay its value fourfold, and more than kept that<sup>12</sup> promise.

Cary seems to have arrived in Jennings on February 7, 1883.<sup>13</sup> On his entry into Jennings he found only the McFarlain family and ten section hands. The town's four buildings consisted of the depot, a section

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9

See Appendix no. 1 for biographical sketch of S. L. Cary.

10

Jennings Daily Times Record, December 31, 1904.

11

Jennings Reporter, January 17, 1889.

12

Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934. Capt. J. F. Merry was head of the Immigration Department of the Illinois Central Railway at the time Cary made his trip.

13

Louisiana Rice Book, p. 100; Jennings Reporter, January 17, 1889; Jennings Daily Times Record, December 31, 1904. He must have arrived at night as the only adheduled stops in Jennings at this time were at night. Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.





14

house, a dwelling house, and McFarlains store. Business at the depot was restricted largely to shipments of hides, eggs, rice, whiskey, and sweet potatoes.<sup>15</sup>

Cary was quickly convinced that Jennings was the paradise for which he was searching and immediately set out to secure his share of the land thereabouts. On February 9, he was in New Orleans filing his homestead claim. According to the records of the Federal Land Office in New Orleans, he secured two tracts of land in Jennings, each consisting of 162<sup>16</sup> acres. He paid a fee of ten dollars for each tract to cover the work involved in changing the title of the land and drawing up deeds and abstracts.

So impressed was "Father" Cary by the attractiveness of the country around Jennings that he felt impelled to share his findings with others. This conviction resulted in his entering upon the second phase of his great adventure, that of bringing fellow mid-westerners to southwest Louisiana. He began to write letters to his friends in Iowa, extolling the advantages of the countryside surrounding Jennings. When he returned to Iowa to remove his family to their newly acquired home, he successfully persuaded several neighbors, preparing to migrate west, to take advantage of the opportunities

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14

Polk's Jennings City Directory, 1947 (Dallas, 1947), p. 14. (Hereafter cited as Polk's Jennings.); Jennings Reporter, January 17, 1889.

15

Louisiana Rice Book, p. 101.

16

Abstracts (photostats) in the files of Eiber-Mayo Title and Guaranty Company, Jennings, Louisiana.





he had discovered in Jennings and southwest Louisiana.<sup>17</sup> In the meanwhile, Cary had applied for the position of station agent for the Southern Pacific Railroad and on April 1, 1883, he received the job.<sup>18</sup> The Southern Pacific assisted "Father" Cary's pioneering activities by making him Northern Immigration Agent and by publishing literature for distribution<sup>19</sup> throughout the middlewest.

Some of the first people to migrate to Jennings were Z. Gallup, George B. Spencer, David Patterson, J. D. Cox, F. D. Noble, Harlo White, William Bull, N. S. Craig, A. S. Blair, Dr. Reynolds, Ed. David, O. Williams, and J. Smallwood.<sup>20</sup> The settlers continued to come, and by 1886 the population of Jennings had reached 150; by 1890, it was 412; and by 1900, 1,539.<sup>21</sup>

The settlers came from throughout the middlewest, but the majority were from Iowa.<sup>22</sup> Those who came were in most instances fairly prosperous farmers for they brought with them household goods, livestock, and farm implements.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>

Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.

<sup>18</sup>

Louisiana Rice Book, p. 100.

<sup>19</sup>

Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>20</sup>

Jennings Reporter, January 17, 1889.

<sup>21</sup>

Association of Commerce Statistics, Jennings, Louisiana.

<sup>22</sup>

This fact is substantiated by the register of the Calcasieu house, which covers the period from February 13, 1885, to January 24, 1887. The original register is now located at the Jennings Public Library.

<sup>23</sup>

Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 28, 1930.



Most of the immigrants came by rail but a few families made the long trip by covered wagon.<sup>24</sup> Among the latter was the wilkins family, who moved down the Mississippi River to a point of debarkation near its junction with the Red River. From there they proceded westward by covered wagon to Jennings. The trip was made without mishap excepting a short period of anxiety experienced when the party crossed Bayou Nezpique on the rickety ferry in use there.<sup>25</sup>

Title abstracts indicate that most of the land ~~inside~~ the original city limits was first procured by homesteading. A sampling of the land registrar's files shows that H. L. Cary ("Father" Cary's son) secured 162 acres on July 11, 1883; F. D. Noble, 82 acres, November 13, 1883; and E. R. Shankland, 162 acres, April 10, 1885. Later acquisitions were make through homesteading by A. L. Brillault, Patterson, Cutting, G.H. Morse, Jenkins, and L. L. Morse.<sup>26</sup>

The people were quick to organize for the purpose of carrying on the society to which they had been accustomed. Religious services began in 1884 and were first held in the depot which was not a busy place in the daytime for the only two trains going through Jennings were scheduled to stop at night. Gathering of church goers in the waiting room of the depot was a regular part of the Sunday routine. As a outgrowth of this gathering

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<sup>24</sup>

New Orleans Daily Picayune, August 4, 1888.

<sup>25</sup>

Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.

<sup>26</sup>

Abstracts, for dates cited.





came the organization of the first Sunday School with "Father" Cary, a Presbyterian, as its superintendent. Other officers were Mrs. L. S. Remage (then Laura Sherman), Episcopalian, and Mrs. Helen Childs, Congregationalist. Teachers were Mrs. W. P. Rose, Baptist, Mrs. E. R. Shankland, Episcopalian, and Mrs. Ephram Crank, Methodist. Thus it is readily apparent that early church activities in Jennings had a pronounced interdenominational character. From this informal Sunday School organization developed the first Jennings Church. In the early part of 1885, the Sunday School accepted the invitation of A. D. McFarlain to share the two-story building that he had just completed.<sup>27</sup>

About this time the Reverend J. A. Jones, of Howard County, Iowa, appeared on the scene and became the guiding spirit of the community's religious life.<sup>28</sup> After a year of rapid progress, the first church organization was established on April 27, 1886. This church was organized as the Union Church; but owing to the development of some problems in its financing the name was changed to the Congregational Church. The members immediately began raising funds for the erection of a church building and on November 21, 1886, the newly completed structure was dedicated. In 1930, Mrs. Remage recalled that everyone donated generously in money and labor to the new church and that D. Derouen, a Catholic, was one of the most liberal contributors.<sup>29</sup> This building was later expanded in order to

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<sup>27</sup>

Jennings Semi-Weekly News, April 27, 1926.

<sup>28</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>

Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October, 28, 1930.





care for the increasing number of settlers.

A second institution which contributed to the foundation and growth of the community was the school. In 1885, McFarlain built and donated to the town a one-room schoolhouse, which was located near the site where Central School now stands. Cary again showed his remarkable leadership and resourcefulness by becoming the school's first teacher. He taught what was known as a "common school", financed by a nominal fee of \$2.50 per month per student.<sup>30</sup>

The spirit of community development was further evidenced by the staging in 1885 of Jennings' first fair. This fair was sponsored by the southwest Louisiana Horticultural Society, an organization founded by E. R. Shankland, who had been a horticulturist in Iowa. The fair opened on August 8, with the waiting room of the depot contributing an exhibit room. People came from the countryside to participate in the event, buying doughnuts and coffee from the local ladies. Prizes were given for the highest quality of peaches, figs, pears, grapes and plums.<sup>31</sup>

Another stabilizing and enriching influence in the community was the Library Society organized on February 7, 1885, by the women of Jennings. In October, 1886, a committee was appointed by the organization to report on the possibility of purchasing a lot to be used for a library site. The committee reported "Father" Cary's offer to donate a lot for

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<sup>30</sup>

Ibid., October 30, 1934.

<sup>31</sup>

Jennings Semi-Weekly News, April 27, 1926.



this purpose. The society accepted this gift, but later relinquished it in favor of a more desirable location. The society was incorporated in 1888, with the following charter members: Mrs. Will Daniels, Mr. J. E. Foster, Mrs. Will Briggs, Mrs. E. Shankland, Mrs. Fannie Noble, Mrs. Laura Ramage, Mrs. Amelia Galkins, Mrs. Abbie Anderson, and Mrs. S. L. Cary. On February 2, 1889, the society purchased a house and lot from Will Daniels and started the first public Library.<sup>32</sup>

Owing to the influx of settlers from the mid-west, the population increased tenfold from 1886 to 1900, growing from 150 to 1,539.<sup>33</sup> With such rapid growth some planning was necessary in the way of laying off streets and lots. McFarlain foreseeing this need in the early 80's platted the forty acres comprising the original town.<sup>34</sup>

The first house, other than the original dwellings, was erected in 1883 by J. G. McMartin on the corner of Cary Avenue and Nezpique Street. The second house was built in 1884 by F. D. Noble. From this time on the construction of residences progressed steadily.

One of the first commercial buildings was the drugstore of Dr. Ramage, built in 1884. In the same year, A. D. McFarlain erected his two-story building, and later, in 1889, he built the first brick structure in Jennings.<sup>36</sup> The first telegraph office was built in 1886. In 1889, Mr.

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<sup>32</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 28, 1930.

<sup>33</sup> Jennings Semi-Weekly News, April 27, 1926.

<sup>34</sup> Jennings Times, April 24, 1902.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Jennings Semi-Weekly News, April 27, 1926.





L. L. Morse established his hardware store in the name of L. L. Morse & Sons. The company was later incorporated as the Morse Hardware Co. Ltd.<sup>37</sup>

The original town, as laid out by A. D. McFarlain, was augmented by the Cary addition, surveyed and platted in 1888.<sup>38</sup> The best picture of Jennings in the pioneer period of the 1880's was given by a Daily Picayune correspondent who was visiting Jennings in July, 1888.

. . . it [Jennings] looks new, a little bleak and treeless, but thoroughly businesslike . . . and there is one saloon and several stores and two or three land offices . . . The houses are small, are low roofed, gabled, . . . and as if hollowed out of a great pine tree . . . but they do not suit the climate, being without wide halls or big windows and encircling porches. There are many hotels, an imposing school and one church. The streets are broad and the houses scattering. . . There are no cisterns, and each labor saving house owner has put a well under the shelter of the kitchen roof. At all the doors and windows are wire screens, and mosquito bars are thereby unnecessary. An enterprising woman opening a furniture and household furnishing and crockery store here, and selling on the installment plan would make a good living. There is not a piano in town, and scarcely a negro, and the lightning rod man has missed the place somehow. There is neither a hardware store, nor a tin shop, nor a news stand, and I am told that for certain reasons of economy many ladies do their shopping in St. Louis or Chicago. There is not a house for rent, none for sale, and at present none building in Jennings, although hundreds of new settlers are looked for this fall.<sup>39</sup>

Since most of the settlers were farmers, agricultural pursuits became of prime importance in the new community. In the mid-western area wheat had been the principal crop; but factors of soil and climate made

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<sup>37</sup> Souvenir (Jennings, 1907).

<sup>38</sup>

Cary, History From Ancient to Modern.

<sup>39</sup>

Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.





the culture of wheat impracticable in the new locality.

The first efforts to develop a marketable crop were concentrated on fruit growing. The Southwest Louisiana Horticultural Society was formed in Jennings to foster the infant orchards. In an effort to enliven interest in fruit culture, this organization sponsored the first  
40  
agricultural fair in Jennings.

Cary's eagerness to see Jennings develop fruit orchards caused him to engage a local orchardist of some renown named Ladd to analyze the soil and recommend the best types of fruit trees for the area. In the process of subsequent experimentation many trees were brought from Georgia that were infected with curculio, a type of weevil. This pest and others  
41  
soon reduced the fruit venture to naught.

Rice was early adopted as the main crop by some individual farmers but concentrated effort in this field came gradually. The insignificant place accorded its growth is evidenced by the fact that a Daily Picayune observer commenting on the Jennings area in 1888 remarked that the soil was "admirably adapted for cattle raising, for hay making, and for fruit, such  
42  
as pears and melons." Thus was overlooked entirely the industry which was destined to become the leading agricultural pursuit of the Jennings region.

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Jennings Semi-Weekly News, April 27, 1926. There is no evidence that awards were made for any agricultural products other than those for various varieties of fruit.

41

Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 28, 1930.

42

Ibid., October 30, 1934.



## Chapter II

### MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT TO 1920

The people of Jennings were not so deeply engaged in their domestic endeavors as to overlook active participation in governmental and political affairs. The townsite was at first located in Ward 2 of Calcasieu Parish. Later it was placed in and largely comprised Ward 10. D. D. Andrus, E. D. Corner and George Hathaway are among those who represented Jennings on the Parish Police Jury.<sup>1</sup> Other citizens of Jennings who served the parish in important capacities during the first decade of the town's history included S. L. Cary, who was appointed as a representative to the State Agricultural Society which met in Baton Rouge on January 26, 1887,<sup>2</sup> and F. D. Noble, who was a delegate to the Interstate Convention held in Lake Charles on February 22, 1887.<sup>3</sup>

Active interest of the community in civic progress during this period is evidenced by a number of petitions submitted to the Calcasieu Police Jury by the citizens of Jennings, seeking construction and improvement of roads and bridges.<sup>4</sup> One such petition requested construction of a

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<sup>1</sup> William H. Perrin, Southwest Louisiana Biographical and historical (New Orleans, 1891), p. 173; Jennings Weekly Times-Record, April 25, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Unpublished Police Jury Minutes of Calcasieu Parish, Volume 5, Book "C", p. 212. (Handwritten copy in the Department of Archives, Louisiana State University of original in Calcasieu Parish Court House, Lake Charles, Louisiana.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 216 ff.





bridge over Bayou Nezpique. This bayou was the boundary line common to Calcasieu and Acadia Parishes. The Calcasieu Jury appointed a committee to confer with the Acadia Parish Police Jury with the view of making this a joint project.<sup>5</sup> The Acadia Parish Police Jury refused to assist in this project but did extend the privilege to Calcasieu Parish to proceed with the construction of the bridge.<sup>6</sup>

By the late 1800's the need of a local government was strongly felt. The General Assembly of the State of Louisiana had provided in 1882 for the incorporation of villages into body politics.<sup>7</sup> This law eliminated the need of a special act of the General Assembly for each village incorporated. The only requirement set forth by the act was that the village applying must have 200 or more inhabitants.<sup>8</sup> In 1888, Jennings, having fulfilled this requirement, immediately took action to set up a municipal government.

On May 2, 1888, John H. Roberts was elected mayor and W. B. Anderson, E. R. Shankland, W. S. Briggs, F. D. Noble and G. H. Morse were chosen trustees.<sup>9</sup> These officials met on the same day of election and appointed a commission to conduct a second election for the adoption of

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<sup>5</sup>  
Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>6</sup>  
Ibid., p. 266.

<sup>7</sup>  
Acts of the General Assembly of Louisiana, 1882 (Baton Rouge, 1882), pp. 60, 61.

<sup>8</sup>  
Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>9</sup>  
Unpublished Ordinance Book of Jennings, Louisiana, 1888-1938, p. 8. (MS in City Hall, Jennings, Louisiana). Hereafter cited as Ordinance Book.



the charter. The town's voters, 34 in number, unanimously adopted the  
 charter on June 9, 1888.<sup>11</sup> The charter provided for the election or  
 appointment of a town marshall and authorized the mayor to hold court for  
 minor offences such as disorder and nuisnace.<sup>12</sup> These two agents together  
 set up the first local law enforcement and court system. In accordance  
 with the charter, the Board of Trustees elected D. Derouen as treasurer  
 and E. J. Miller as town marshall. At the same time the board appointed  
 committees on finance, ordinance, and street.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of 1888, the town council had put into effect twenty  
 six ordinances. These first municipal laws dealt with taxes, range laws,  
 dog licenses, road work, sanitary conditions, curfew on taverns, right  
 of peaceable assembly, construction of wooden sidewalks, and prohibited  
 the carrying of deadly weapons.<sup>14</sup>

The town was governed under the original charter until 1892.  
 On Dedember 31, of that year, the people voted to supplement the charter  
 by the adpption of several amendments. Some of these amendments made  
 various sections of the charter more specific, while others dealt with

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<sup>10</sup>

Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>

Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>12</sup>

Ibid., pp. 2-7. See Appendix Number 5 for an outline of  
 the charter's provisions.

<sup>13</sup>

Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>14</sup>

Ibid., pp. 24-62. See Appendix Number 6 for brief summary  
 of city ordinances.





problems not anticipated at the time the first charter was adopted. One of the amendments provided that the mayor and trustees should be elected annually rather than every two years as outlined in the first charter. Another amendment provided for a town supported school for children from six to eighteen years of age within the city limits.<sup>15</sup>

The next change in the city government was inaugurated in 1900 during the administration of Mayor Twitchell.<sup>16</sup> When the people by an overwhelming majority voted to incorporate Jennings as a municipality under the mayor-alderman plan,<sup>17</sup> as provided by a legislative act of 1898.

In 1912, the legislature passed an act which authorized municipalities to adopt the mayor-commissioner plan of city government.<sup>18</sup> Jennings was quick to take advantage of the new system.<sup>19</sup> For some years after the creation of the city government, the city officials discharged their public duties in conjunction with their individual business pursuits. This practice was due in part to the limited funds of the new government and also to the fact that full time work was not necessary to carry on the administrative duties. The early mayors evidently sought the office for reasons other than pay as the salary was only \$10.00 a month.<sup>20</sup> The first

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<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-12.

<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Acts of the General Assembly of Louisiana, 1898 (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1898), pp. 224-244.

<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 1912, pp. 425-435.

<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Ordinance Book, p. 307.

<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Unpublished City Council Minutes of Jennings, Louisiana; The City Record, 1900-1902, p. 11, (MS in City Hall, Jennings, Louisiana). Cited hereafter as the City Record.



salary adjustment was made in 1905 when the mayor's remuneration was raised to \$50.00 a month.<sup>21</sup>

The town marshall was also employed on a part-time basis at \$100.00 a year plus the fees of the office, which were paid to him by the owners concerned for such services as the removal of dead animals and impounding and keeping livestock caught running at large in the city limits.<sup>22</sup> In 1907 the marshall was employed full time and given the duties of chief of police.<sup>23</sup> The salaries of trustees and aldermen varied from time to time, never being more than \$50.00 a year.<sup>24</sup> In 1910 the city councilmen voted to donate their salaries back to the city.<sup>25</sup>

The citizens of the town took a lively interest in the selection of public officials. It was a common practice to hold mass meetings for the purpose of selecting qualified candidates to present to the voters for their consideration.<sup>26</sup> The Acadian attitudes toward politics in the early days is best expressed by a quotation from the Jennings Times-Record of 1903:

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.: Municiple Minutes, 1905-1911, p. 3. (MS in City Hall, Jennings, Louisiana). Cited hereafter as Municipal Minutes.

<sup>22</sup> Ordinance Book, p. 82.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>24</sup> City Record, p. 140

<sup>25</sup> Municipal Minutes, p. 358.

<sup>26</sup> Jennings Weekly Times Record, February 2, 1907; Jennings Beacon, November 29, 1899.





Mos' h'ev'ry day two t'ree men come to my house an say "Shake han's, you ma friend. I been knowin' you long time, me. Maybe you like to take de small drink." I don't know dat man, me, but he say he know me. He know my name, h'all right an' he know de mane of H'all my big boys. He kiss de baby, an' tell me ma wife he t'ink ma daughter, Yes.

Dat's a ver' nice man an' when he h'ask me if I'm goin' vote for 'm, say "Yes sir"; h'every time. "H'all ma boy and h'all ma frien's hey goin' vote for you too. You good man, yes."

I wonder what dat man run for. Dat's good man, but I forgot his name.<sup>27</sup>

In 1888 the people of Jennings built a second school building.<sup>28</sup>

This structure was erected under the direction of A. D. McFarlain, E. R.

Shankland, and L. S. Cutting.<sup>29</sup> The ground plan of the building was

similar in shape to a cross. There were four rooms downstairs, two large

and two small. The upstairs served as a public hall.<sup>30</sup> Five teachers

constituted the teaching staff.<sup>31</sup> This school, erected by a stock company,

was paid for by the people through subscriptions in the company.

The first assistance from the city government was the provision of a teachers' fund. A special tax of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  mills was passed for this purpose

in 1889.<sup>32</sup> Also in 1889 the board of trustees made Jennings a school dis-

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<sup>27</sup>

Jennings Weekly-Times-Record, December 25, 1903.

<sup>28</sup>

The first school was that taught by S. L. Cary in the building donated by A. D. McFarlain.

<sup>29</sup>

Jennings Times, April 24, 1902.

<sup>30</sup>

New Orleans Daily Picayune, August 2, 1888.

<sup>31</sup>

Jennings Beacon, November 29, 1899.

<sup>32</sup>

Ordinance Book, p. 70.



trict. A school board was set up composed of three elected directors.

In addition to the public school system there were two private schools in the years prior to 1900. One of these was directed by Professor Briggs, who had formerly been connected with the public school, and the other by a Miss Spurgeons.<sup>34</sup>

By the beginning of the school year 1902-03, the enrollment had reached 300 pupils.<sup>35</sup> This group was instructed by one principal, one assistant principal and seven teachers.<sup>36</sup> The teachers' pay was very low, ranging from \$75 per month for the principal to \$35 per month for primary grade teachers.<sup>37</sup> This depressed pay scale in 1902 brought forth an editorial urging an increase of teachers' salaries.<sup>38</sup> By 1904 the pay scale was increased to \$100 and \$65 respectively.<sup>39</sup>

The crowded conditions prevailing in the school system due to the increased population as a result of the oil discovery caused the officials in January, 1902, to cease registration of new students in the beginning grades.<sup>40</sup> This occurrence brought on continued agitation for

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<sup>34</sup> Jennings Beacon, November 29, 1902.

<sup>35</sup> Jennings Daily\*Record, September 16, 1902.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., July 26, 1902.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., April 28, 1902.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., August 6, 1902.

<sup>39</sup> Jennings Weekly Times-Record, July 22, 1904.

<sup>40</sup> Jennings Daily-Record, January 20, 1902.





additional school facilities. The situation was not alleviated until October, 1902. At that time the board of trustees let a contract for the erection of Southside School south of the railroad.<sup>41</sup>

During these early years, Jennings' schools received no financial support from Calcasieu Parish. The old parish school board, owing to limited funds, provided only for rural schools. The schools located in towns were to be supported by municipal taxes.<sup>42</sup> In view of this the board of trustees deemed it only fair that tuition fees should be charged to pupils residing outside the city limits.<sup>43</sup>

The people of Jennings were never satisfied with their educational facilities. Even before the Southside School was completed a meeting was held jointly by the Board of Directors and the Commercial League to discuss the school situation. S. L. Cary, Dr. Hall, and Prof. Slowatter, the school principal were appointed as a committee to investigate the possibility of erecting a new high school.<sup>44</sup> In 1905, it was proposed that the city incur a debt of \$35,000 to build a new school.<sup>45</sup> But not until two years later were definite steps taken to secure a new school. On May 18, 1907, the property owners of Jennings voted by a large majority to become indebted to the amount of \$40,000 for the erection of a new school.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>

Jennings Weekly Times-Record, October 9, 1903.

<sup>42</sup>

Jennings Daily Times, October 23, 1901.

<sup>43</sup>

City Record, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup>

Jennings Weekly Times-Record, September 25, 1903.

<sup>45</sup>

Ordinance Book, p. 190.

<sup>46</sup>

Jennings Times-Record, May 18, 1907.



Bids for the new building were let in July, 1908, and work began immediately. The new school was ready for the 1909-10 school year. This marked the end of school construction in Jennings until after World War I. In the year 1910-11 the school system served 502 students and had a thousand volume library.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to the public and private schools mentioned, Jennings was served also by St. Henry's Academy,<sup>48</sup> a Catholic school, and the Industrial Academy.<sup>49</sup>

In 1901 the library, which the Ladies Library Society had established, was destroyed by the great conflagration which swept away most of Jennings' business district.<sup>50</sup> The society, refusing to give up their goal of an adequate library for Jennings, immediately set out to restore that which had been lost. A local merchant gave the society the use of a part of his store. He further provided a librarian by allowing one of his employees to act in this capacity. The few remaining volumes

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Twenty-Second Annual Report of John McNeese, Superintendent of Public Education, Calcasieu Parish, 1910-11, p. 15. Jennings was a member, along with Abbeville, Crowley, Lake Charles, New Iberia and Welsh, of the Gulf Coast High School League. This organization sponsored athletic and intellectual contests between the member schools. It was also a member of the Inter-Scholastic Oratorical and Athletic Association, an organization similar in schpe to the Gulf Coast League. Gulf Coast High School League (Jennings, Louisiana, 1907), pp. 1-10; Jennings Weekly Times-Record, April 20, 1907.

48

Souvenir, Jennings, Louisiana, 1907.

49

Jennings Industrial Academy (Jennings, Louisiana, n.d.), pp. 1-8.

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For an account of this great fire see below p. 36.





were supplemented gradually until the library was again of moderate proportions. After seeling the old library site, the society purchased two very desirable lots on the old library site, the society pruchased two very desirable lots on the corner of Cary Avenue and West Market Street.<sup>51</sup>

The City Council in 1905 turned down a request for \$1,000 a year to support the library.<sup>52</sup> The following year the society called a mass meeting to devise means of raising money for the library.<sup>53</sup> All efforts came to naught until the society decided to solicit Andrew Carnegie for a grant to build a library for Jennings. Mrs. F. R. Jaenke corresponded with the Carnegie Foundation and successfully secured the money. Since the Carnegie Foundation stipulated that the recipient city of such a grant must own the ground on which the building was to be erected, the society made the site communal by deeding the property to the city of Jennings.<sup>54</sup>

In 1907 the city accepted the donation of land and the \$10,000 grant from Andrew Carnegie. In accepting the land and money the city agreed to appropriate \$1,000 per year for the support of the library.<sup>55</sup> The city further provided by ordinance, a Library Board of Trustees to administer the new Library. The first board was composed of mesdames

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<sup>51</sup>

Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.

<sup>52</sup>

Municipal Minutes, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup>

Jennings Weekly Times-Record, November 2, 1906.

<sup>54</sup>

Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.

<sup>55</sup>

Ordinance Book, p. 209.



J. R. Jaenke, J. H. Heiner, G. W. Ramage, G. P. Corutney, M. L. Roberts, George Hathaway, N. S. Craig, and T. L. Waddell, with the high school principal being named ex-officiate member of the board.<sup>56</sup> The library was completed in 1908 and stands today as the Jennings Public Library.

Another project receiving the attention of the local government was the improvement of roads and streets. This work had always been done by the collective labor of all able-bodied males in the community. All men were required to put in four days work a year or pay \$1.50 per diem in lieu of such work.<sup>57</sup> With the passing of the years, the act governing collective labor was repeatedly revised so as to require less and less work per individual.<sup>58</sup> The practice of collective labor was finally discontinued when the paving of streets commenced.<sup>59</sup>

In conjunction with the road work, the building of sidewalks was undertaken soon after the City Council began to function. The city required property owners to construct wooden sidewalks abutting their premises. It was specified that if the owners failed to comply with the law the city would have the walks built at the owners expense. The city assumed the responsibility of constructing the street crossings.<sup>60</sup>

The Jennings Beacon in 1899 paid a special compliment to several business houses including T. C. Mahaffey, and the Jennings Banking and

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<sup>56</sup> Municipal Minutes, PP. 172-3.

<sup>57</sup> Ordinance Book, p. 43.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Passim.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 355.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 45.





trust Company, that were constructing brick sidewalks in front of their<sup>61</sup> buildings and urged all firms to take up the project.

The city continued to pass ordinances up to 1900 providing for<sup>62</sup> wooden walks. The greater portion of these walks were destroyed during

the 1901 conflagration. This resulted in the construction of concrete walks by the businessmen, in the absence of any law requiring them to do so. Photographs show that in the rebuilding of the business district after the fire, the concrete foundations of the buildings were constructed in such a manner as to form a sidewalk between the front walls of the buildings and the street.<sup>63</sup> The construction of walks as a result of this

rebuilding was so thorough that not until 1910 was it necessary for the town to pass ordinances on the subject.<sup>64</sup> After 1910 the work of building walks continued without interruption until the needs of the city were satisfied.<sup>65</sup>

Municipal growth necessitated the expansion of existing public utilities and the installation of new services. Telephone and electric light facilities were established in 1898 and 1899 respectively, but water works and a sewerage system came more tardily.

The first step toward securing a water works was taken in 1900

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<sup>61</sup> Jennings Beacon, November 22, 1899.

<sup>62</sup> Ordinance Book, pp. 45 ff.

<sup>63</sup> Jennings Times, April 24, 1902.

<sup>64</sup> Ordinance Book, p. 257.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 258 ff.



when the town council passed an ordinance authorizing an election to determine whether or not the city should incur an indebtedness of \$25,000<sup>65</sup> for the construction of a public water system. But there is no record that this election occurred.

Lack of a water system resulted in a tremendous loss to the people in the great fire of 1901, and brought this glaring defect of the city's facilities to the attention of all. Agitation for a water works never ceased until an ordinance was passed calling for an election to determine whether or not the city should undertake the work involved.<sup>67</sup> The issue was raised as to whether the water works should be owned privately or by the municipality. Most of the citizens were in favor of municipal ownership and in 1902 a mass meeting was held to voice opinion<sup>68</sup> in the matter.

An election held on February 18, 1902, resulted in a sweeping victory for public ownership. In this same election overwhelming majorities were registered for a water works, a sewerage system and a town hall. The citizenry was so exhilarated over the outcome of the election that a large jubilee was held in town on the night of February 22, to celebrate the victory. The event was the occasion for many fireworks and much cannon<sup>69</sup> firing.

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<sup>66</sup>

Ibid., p. 136. This amount was to be raised by the sale of one hundred bonds of \$250 each bearing five per cent interest per annum. The debt was to be paid off by a special tax of five mills to be enforced from 1900 to 1929.

<sup>67</sup>

Ordinance Book, p. 158.

<sup>68</sup>

Jennings Daily Record, February 15, 1902.

<sup>69</sup>

Ibid., February 24, 1902.





By August of 1902, one hundred men had begun work on the water and sewerage system.<sup>70</sup> Less than a year later representatives of the city council inspected the systems and accepted them from the contractor.<sup>71</sup>

The rates chargeable for the service rendered by these two systems were fixed by the city council at fifty cents a month per faucet, fifty cents a month for each bath tub, closet and kitchen sink. These rates applied both to residential and commercial services with the exception of saloons which were charged \$2.00 a faucet.<sup>72</sup> The city council discovered in 1906 that the five mill tax enacted to retire the bonds would leave a surplus. The members immediately petitioned the state requesting that a law be passed enabling the city to use the surplus as it saw fit.<sup>73</sup>

Further steps were taken in 1907 to insure an adequate water supply at all times. The town entered into an agreement with the Northern Rice Milling Company calling for cooperation in time of water shortages or breakdowns in the system of either party. This was accomplished by each party connecting on to the reservoir of the other.<sup>74</sup> The water supply was considerably strengthened in 1908 when the city contracted for the drilling of another well. The contract called for a well with pumping facilities that would provide 700 to 1,000 gallons per minute. The con-

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<sup>70</sup>

Ibid., August 26, 1902.

<sup>71</sup>

Jennings Southern Record, April 24, 1903.

<sup>72</sup>

Ordinance Book, p. 173.

<sup>73</sup>

Municipal Minutes, pp. 49-50.

<sup>74</sup>

Ibid., p. 135.



tract was accepted and carried out by Layne and Bowler Company.

The first franchise for electric power was granted in 1899.

This franchise accorded to R. S. Stearns and Associates the right to install, maintain and operate an electric light and power plant in

Jennings.<sup>76</sup> Operating under the name of the Jennings Electric Light and Power Company,<sup>77</sup> a new franchise was obtained in 1904. The city

contracted for electric street lights in 1914 from the Jennings Company.<sup>78</sup>

The growth of the large public utility companies made possible the use of modern equipment, better service and reduced rates. In 1919 the Public Service Company of Southwest Louisiana absorbed the Jennings Company<sup>79</sup> and began to render public and private service to the town.

A system of communication was developed along with public utilities and other improvements. The first franchise for telephone service was granted on March 1, 1889, to L. V. Johnson and Albert Perkins of Acadia Parish. The charge of installation was \$18.00 per box with a monthly service charge of \$2.00. The telephone office remained open from 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. weekdays and from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. on Sundays. In compliance with the franchise the company agreed to install and maintain a<sup>80</sup> telephone in the depot free of charge. This franchise was not exclusive.

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<sup>75</sup>

Ibid., pp. 184-185.

<sup>76</sup>

Ordinance Book, p. 132.

<sup>77</sup>

Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>78</sup>

Ibid., p. 322.

<sup>79</sup>

Ibid., p. 361.

<sup>80</sup>

Ibid., p. 126.





In 1910 the city council authorized the Cumberland Telephone and Telegraph company to operate in Jennings. The franchise granted stipulated that a telephone would be installed in the mayor's office free of charge.<sup>81</sup> The new exchange brought many new additions to the list of telephone subscribers. This was due to the opening up of more lines, lowering of rates and modern facilities which expedited the placing of calls.<sup>82</sup>

In March, 1889, the Postal Telegraph and Cable Company was authorized to operate a telegraph service in Jennings.<sup>83</sup>

Improvements were not left entirely in the hands of the local government. The citizenry made extensive use of civic organizations to numerous groups which worked diligently for the advancement of the town and its citizens. Another of the outstanding civic groups was the Civic League. This organization also drew its membership from the women of the community. The league was organized on November 16, 1907, and secured its charter on May 1, 1909. Its record of achievements is indeed an enviable one. Its most meritorious contribution is undoubtedly the improvement and maintenance of the cemetery. The league established and collected standard fees from the individual owners for the care of the cemetery lots. The funds thus acquired were used to hire a full time sexton whose job it

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<sup>81</sup>

Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>82</sup>

Jennings Daily Times, October 21, and October 23, 1901.

<sup>83</sup>

Ordinance Book, p. 128.



was to care for the lots and keep the grounds attractive. The Jennings Board of Health usually called on the league for cooperation on the general clean-up and inspection day held one day out of every month. The conducting of bazaars was a routine affair. These provided both entertainment for the town and also funds which the league utilized in its various civic undertakings. In addition to the activities outlined, the league sponsored tree planting, made scholarship loans, aided the Fair Association, provided the city with two parks, agitated for paving<sup>84</sup> and instituted a city sanitation program.

One of the oldest civic groups in Jennings with a continuous history is the Woman's Literary Club which was organized in 1894. The club's specific purpose in organizing was the mental improvement of its members in literature, art, science, and "vital interests of the day." In general the club sought to enrich its members in the cultural qualities<sup>85</sup> requisite to a well ordered society.

Soon after oil became a part of the Jennings scene, businessmen of Jennings realizing a boom was on, held a mass meeting of all those engaged in business pursuits. The purpose of the meeting was to promote the prosperity of the town by taking advantage of the discovery of petroleum.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>

Unpublished Minutes of the Civic League, 1907-1914, et passim. (MS in the law office of Walter Peters, Jennings, Louisiana).

<sup>85</sup>

Unpublished Reports of the Woman's Literary Club, 1894-1944. (MS in the Jennings Public Library).

<sup>86</sup>

Jennings Daily Times, October 2, 1901.





An editorial in the Jennings Daily Times followed up this meeting by strongly advocating the organization of a commercial league, with a full-time secretary to promote the growth and advancement of the community.<sup>87</sup> The outcome of this editorial was the organization of the Jennings Commercial League in 1902 with Alba Heywood as president.<sup>88</sup> One of the first steps taken by the league was to secure municipal tax exemption for eight years as an inducement for new industries to come to Jennings.<sup>89</sup> In 1902 the league was host to the Rice Association of America which met in Jennings in that year.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, the league participated in various minor movements for the betterment of the town.<sup>91</sup> It was not uncommon for the league to call mass meetings in order to present problems of a civic nature to the public.<sup>92</sup>

Various other organizations such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Ladies Aid Society, Grand Army of the Republic, Epworth League, Elks Lodge, Knights of Pythias and Woman's Relief Corps served the town by orienting their members toward the goal of a more perfect community.

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<sup>87</sup>

Ibid., October 19, 1901.

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Souvenir, Jennings, Louisiana, 1903.

<sup>89</sup>

Jennings Daily Record, August 11, 1902.

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Ibid., October 30, 1902.

<sup>91</sup>

Ibid., November 1, 1902.

<sup>92</sup>

Ibid., October 1, 1902.



In the formative years of Jennings, 1900-1910, the desire for civic improvement permeated the society. More so during this period than at any other time, the various city records, newspapers and records of civic organizations show a concentrated effort toward the general advancement of the community.

The creation of Jennings and its continuous growth ultimately led to the division of Calcasieu Parish. As early as 1896 bills had been submitted to the state legislature providing for a division of "Imperial Calcasieu." Since Lake Charles contained a vaster population than any other area in the parish, the state representative came from Lake Charles and naturally led the fight against such a division.<sup>93</sup>

After the defeat of the division bill of 1908, the backers of parish division in Jennings formed the Jefferson Davis Parish Division Club in order to keep the issue alive.<sup>94</sup> The newspapers of Jennings and Lake Charles took every opportunity to chide each other concerning parish division. The Lake Charles Press referred to Jennings as the Alba Heywood Parish; Heywood being one of the advocated for division. The Lake Charles Press remarked that division was so important to Jennings that the school children there were started in arithmetic with a division problem.<sup>95</sup> An editorial of the Jennings Weekly Times-Record stated:

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<sup>93</sup> Jefferson Davis Parish Resources and Facilities (Baton Rouge, 1947), p. 13. Cited hereafter as Jeff Davis Parish Resources.

<sup>94</sup> Jennings Weekly Times-Record, July 4, 1908.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., May 4, 1906.





The people of Lake Charles fear that division of Calcasieu Parish with Jennings as the parish seat of the new parish would cause Calcasieu to become a Republican Parish. Jennings has never failed to give the state democratic ticket a majority while Lake Charles has given a republican majority on several occasions. They fear that without the solid democratic vote of Jennings old Calcasieu is liable to give a republican majority most any old time, because she won't have the democracy of Jennings to hold her down.<sup>96</sup>

The division was finally accomplished on June 12, 1912, when Governor Luther B. Hall signed bills creating Jefferson Davis, Beauregard<sup>97</sup> and Allen Parishes out of a part of the Old Calcasieu Parish. This precipitated the bitter fight for the selection of a parish seat for Jefferson Davis Parish. From June until October, 1912, speeches were made, editorials written and circulars distributed by the citizens of Jennings, Welsh and Lake Arthur, each town attempting to persuade the voters that it was the ideal parish seat. Advantages lay heavily with Jennings. The town was in a position to offer its Town Hall for a period of ten years to the parish. Furthermore it was the only town in the parish which could boast of a public water works, sewerage system, and electirc light plant.<sup>98</sup>

A provisional police jury of five members appointed by the governor selected Lake Arthur as a temporary parish seat and held their first meeting July 24, 1912.<sup>99</sup> The provisional jury ordered an election

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<sup>96</sup>

Ibid., May 27, 1904.

<sup>97</sup>

Jeff Davis Parish Resources, p. 13,

<sup>98</sup>

Jennings Daily Times-Record, September 21, 1912.

<sup>99</sup>

Jeff Davis Parish Resources, p. 13; Unpublished Police Jury Minutes of Jefferson Davis Parish, Book 1, P. 1. (Handwritten copy in the Department of Archives, Louisiana State University, of original in the Jefferson Davis Parish Court House, Jennings, Louisiana.) Cited hereafter as Jeff Davis Parish Minutes.



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in the parish for determining the permanent seat of government. Any town in the parish could become a candidate provided it filed its intention by August 10, 1912, and agreed to the following: (1) to donate to the parish 47,000 square feet of open land not more than 750 feet from the principal railroad depot or post office; (2) to provide suitable quarters and furnishings for the government; (3) to post a \$10,000 bond as a guaranty of offices and furnishings; and (4) to accompany the intention of candidacy with the deed to the land.

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The wholehearted effort of each town in securing the seat of government is illustrated by action of the newspapers in the three competing towns. On the request of the provisional jury for bids on the official printing of the parish the Welsh Printing Company, the Lake Arthur Herald and the Jennings Times-Record submitted bids for the work. On opening the sealed bids it was found that the Welsh Printing Company had bid one cent while the other two agencies had bid nothing. The two bids carrying no consideration were announced as the two lowest. By a vote of three to two the jury selected the Jennings Times-Record as the official organ of the parish. The Welsh representative contested this selection on the basis that a contract to be binding must carry some consideration, thus the Welsh bid should be accepted and the other two rejected. The jury over-rode the objection and sustained the original selection.

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Jeff Davis Parish Minutes, p. 2.

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This distance was later changed to 1,500 feet.

102

Jeff Davis Parish Minutes, p. 3.

103

Ibid., p. 8.





The first election was held on September 24, 1912. Lake Arthur was eliminated as a candidate, leaving Jennings and Welsh in the Run-off. The fight grew bitter even to the point of Jennings' citizens burning Welsh's leading citizens in effigy.<sup>105</sup> On October 22, 1912,<sup>106</sup> Jennings was chosen as the parish seat by a majority of 79 votes. The duly elected parish officials took office in the new quarters on January 1, 1913, from which date the parish government began to function.<sup>107</sup>

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104

Some Reasons Why Jennings Should be The Parish Seat of Jefferson Davis Parish (Jennings, Louisiana, 1912), p. 1.

105

Jeff Davis Parish Resources, p. 14.

106

Ibid., p. 13.

107

Stella McNeese Gauthier, "Jefferson Davis Parish Court House," The Louisiana Bar (January, 1945), p. 3.



### CHAPTER III

#### Growth of Business and Social Life

The period from 1900 to 1910 was the decade of Jennings' most rapid growth. Development of the oil and rice industries was attracting many people to Jennings during this time. In turn, this created new enterprises designed to supply the necessities of those engaged in the city's basic industries.

An examination of the advertising section of the Jennings Beacon for December, 1899, revealed the following business concerns: two hardware stores, an undertaker, a restaurant, a book agent, a dentist, a doctor, a grocery store, a furniture store, a rice mill and a shoe shop.<sup>1</sup>

Within the next two years Jennings underwent a phenomenal expansion. A similar examination of advertisements for 1902 showed the following: two banks, four doctors, three dentists, four grocery stores, two general merchandise stores, seven real estate firms, eleven oil companies, two law firms, two rice mills, and two shoe stores. Various other firms were also listed, such as a music shop, tin shop, machine works, lumber yards, building contractors, painters, drug stores, dry goods stores, surveyors, laundry, and well diggers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jennings Beacon, December 13, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Jennings Daily Record, January 2, 1902





The tremendous population increase through immigration accounted in large measure for this amazing transformation. The solicitation of the railroad and other groups and the attraction created by the discovery of oil brought unusually large numbers of settlers and transients to Jennings. The formation in 1888 of the Association of Northern Settlers in Jennings is one example of the active participation on the part of the immigrants in urging others to follow their path into Southwest Louisiana. This association had for its president S. L. Cary, who was conceded to be the most outstanding booster of that part of the state. The association resolved at its first meeting that: (1) the members were pleased with Southwest Louisiana; (2) they desired more immigrants from the north; and (3) more extensive settling in the Southwestern Louisiana region should be encouraged.<sup>3</sup>

A similar and more far-reaching program was initiated in New Orleans, where a convention was held in August, 1888, of all recent Northern and Western immigrants, primarily for the purpose of encouraging further immigration to southwest Louisiana. It was agreed that erroneous beliefs concerning poor health and undesirable climate were the obstacles to be overcome in persuading others to come South. Participants in the convention were encouraged to relate their personal experiences in regard to health and climatic conditions. These accounts were to be incorporated in pamphlets encouraging immigration to the southwest region of Louisiana and distributed throughout the North and West.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> New Orleans Daily Picayune, August 3, 1888.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., July 9, 1888



The results of such activity were soon felt. The Jennings Beacon in 1899 recorded that the town was full of visitors. Some of these were prospectors investigating the possibility of settling in the Jennings area, while others were just there to spend the winter.

The discovery of oil, in the fall of 1901, was by far the most important factor in bringing boom times to the city. Within two weeks after the first well was brought in, eleven oil companies, domiciled in Jennings, were in operation.<sup>6</sup> Oil served not only to bring transient speculators to Jennings but also served to advertise the opportunities available in the city to homeseekers. One month after the first well gushed the Shreveport railroad depot reported that 371 immigrants passed through headed for southwest Louisiana. This group, from Iowa and Illinois, was comprised of both prospectors and homeseekers.<sup>7</sup>

During the era of this expansion the great fire of November 4, 1901, almost completely destroyed the business section of Jennings.<sup>8</sup> The conflagration, starting at approximately 3:45 in the morning, before running its course consumed nearly all of the commercial structures. As previously noted, the most tragic aspect of the whole affair was the lack of any type of fire fighting apparatus.<sup>9</sup> The only expedient method of

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<sup>5</sup> Jennings Beacon, November 29, 1899.

<sup>6</sup> Jennings Daily Record, November 2, 1901.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., November 23, 1901.

<sup>8</sup> Jennings Times, April 24, 1902.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 24.





combatting the flames was the bucket brigade, using the nearest water wells as a source of supply. The estimated loss was \$198,275. Of this amount only \$52,500 was covered by insurance.

The city council met the day following the holocaust and established fire limits for the business district. Within these limits only buildings of stone, brick, or other noncombustible materials could be erected. In order not to hamper business unduly the mayor was given authority to issue permits for temporary buildings. These could not be used for over ninety days. The fire also resulted in immediate agitation for a waterworks. The local newspaper became the standard bearer for the movement, never letting the issue die until the election for the sale of bonds was won some three and one-half months later.

This disaster served as a stepping stone for modernization of the commercial property. It was opportune that this conflagration occurred at the beginning of the boom in Jennings as the officials and leaders in planning the rebuilding of the town were able to take into consideration its enlarged status.

Photographs of the main street in Jennings prior to the fire

<sup>10</sup> Jennings Daily Record, November 6, 1901. The total loss and insurance coverage were computed from the figures given the Daily Record reporter by the individual owners who suffered loss as a result of the Fire.

<sup>11</sup> City Record, pp. 74,75,77; Jennings Daily Record, November 5, 1901

<sup>12</sup> Jennings Daily Record, November 9, 1901. Articles urging an erection of water works appeared on November 10, 11, 12, and 13. The issue was discussed intermittently until the election of February 18, 1902.



show that the majority of the business firms occupied frame structures.

But pictures taken in April, 1902, reveal a number of two-story brick  
 14  
 and stone edifices lining the principal thoroughfare.

Within the first decade of the Twentieth Century Jennings was the scene of widespread activity both in construction work and the creation of new enterprises. But the next ten years brought little change in the number of commercial firms. The one exception was in the oil industry. Though the greater part of the oil development had been completed by 1910, and many of the exploitive concerns had ceased active operation, those companies having sound holdings, such as the Heywood brothers, leased out the operation of their wells to major oil companies or independent opera-  
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 tors.

The increased population and growth of the town gave an added impetus to social activity. As in any developing urban society, the social life gradually became more complex. In the beginning the home and church were the basis of social intercourse.

The church bazaar was a popular social affair for the community. The Ladies Aid Societies, Sunday Schools and other church activities constituted an important diversion for the citizens. Jennings was certainly not lacking in the number of institutions needed to provide for the religious aspect of life and to aid in the social life of the people.

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<sup>13</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.

<sup>14</sup> Jennings Times, April 24, 1902.

<sup>15</sup> W. Scott Heywood, "The Autobiography of an Oil Man," Oil (July, 1941), pp. 21-24. Cited hereafter as "Autobiography."





The interdenominational character of the first established church later accounted for the wide variety of protestant denominations.<sup>16</sup> By 1899 the protestant sects included Methodist, Episcopalian, Congregationalist, United Bretheran, Baptist, German Baptist, and the German Evangelical Lutheran.<sup>17</sup> Later the Christian, Emmanuel Lutheran and the French Christian churches were established.<sup>18</sup>

Catholics in Jennings, prior to 1892, were served by Father Fallon of Lake Charles. In January of 1892, Archbishop Janssens set up a parish at Jennings, appointing Father Cornelius Van de Ven as pastor. Father Van de Ven served Jennings until December, 1892, and later became the Bishop of Alexandria.<sup>19</sup> Father Joseph Peeters came in the latter part of 1892 and remained for twenty-four years. It was during his pastership that the construction of a new church building, Our Lady Help of Christians, was undertaken. The building, cost \$75,000. was nine years under construction.<sup>20</sup> In 1917 the Reverend Louis Erpitaillier succeeded Father Peeters and remained in Jennings for ten years.<sup>21</sup> The Catholic Church, even though the largest body in Jennings by the late twenties, constituted

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<sup>16</sup> See page 7.

<sup>17</sup> Jennings Beacon, December 20, 1899.

<sup>18</sup> Jennings News, November 20, 1928.

<sup>19</sup> Roger Baudier, The Catholic Church in Louisiana (New Orleans, 1939), p.485.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 486, 545; Jennings News, November 20, 1928.

<sup>21</sup> Baudier, The Catholic Church in Louisiana, p. 545.



a pronounced minority when compared to the total protestant population.<sup>22</sup>

As the population soared activities of the religious institutions and the home were supplemented by those of private clubs and public entertainment projects.

Some measures were taken to keep social activities in due bounds, according to the standards of the day. In 1888 a law was passed prohibiting ball playing on Sunday within the city limits.<sup>23</sup> The city council amended this law in 1900 so as to exempt the Jennings Baseball Club.<sup>24</sup> As late as 1920 the local government banned Sunday movies and theatricals.<sup>25</sup> Carousing and Sunday socials were also taboo in the young community.<sup>26</sup> In 1899 the city council passed a curfew law providing for the clearing of the streets at the sound of a whistle which was to be blown at an early hour every night.<sup>27</sup> This ordinance was repealed in 1907 on petition of the citizens.<sup>28</sup>

The people were not always receptive to entertainment originating from the outside. In 1894 some of the inhabitants directed complaints against the city council for allowing an exhibition gun artist ("Wild Jim")

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<sup>22</sup> Jennings News, November 20, 1928.

<sup>23</sup> Ordinance Book, p. 48.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 373.

<sup>26</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October, 1936 (Fair Edition).

<sup>27</sup> Ordinance Book, p. 133.

<sup>28</sup> Municipal Minutes, p. 133.





to stage a show in Jennings. The chief cause of disgruntlement was the violation of a city ordinance prohibiting the discharge of fire arms within the city-limits.<sup>29</sup> A moving picture company which began operation on July 1, 1907, in the opera house, had to leave town after only a few weeks because of the lack of attendance.<sup>30</sup>

The Fourth of July had on some occasions been observed by traveling to other towns to celebrate the holiday. The Weekly Times-Record proudly announced in 1907 that Jennings was going to observe the Fourth at home.<sup>31</sup> On this Independence Day the populace celebrated by attending a ball game, races, and track events. Significant of the northern origin of much of the population was the fact that fire works were set off throughout the day to further the spirit of celebration.<sup>32</sup>

Thanksgiving day was observed in the orthodox manner. Stores were closed at 10 in the morning and the day was given to social dinners, family reunions and church services.<sup>33</sup>

Some found diversion in visiting neighboring towns. In the fall of 1901 large crowds from Jennings attended the circus in Lake Charles where they spent an estimated \$700.<sup>34</sup> The New Orleans Mardi Gras celebra-

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<sup>29</sup> Jennings Times, January 4, 1894.

<sup>30</sup> Jennings Weekly Times-Record, July 27, 1907.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., July 15, 1907.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., July 4, 1907.

<sup>33</sup> Jennings Beacon, December 6, 1899.

<sup>34</sup> Jennings Daily Times, October 23, 1901.



tion also drew a goodly number of people from Jennings. Such excursions are not to be taken as an indication that Jennings was lacking in public entertainment of its own for this was not the case.

The Jennings Opera House provided entertainment of a very refined and dignified type. One of the earlier programs featured Edwin Sother in Monte Christo.<sup>36</sup> On occasions the road shows at the Opera House featured displays of local talent interspersed in the program. The Heywood brothers were called on from time to time to demonstrate their musical ability. Scott played the cornet, Dewey the flute, and Alba sang songs and gave impersonations.<sup>37</sup> The race track, street fairs and boxing arena provided frequent programs to satisfy the desire of entertainment.<sup>38</sup>

The municipal band gave occasional concerts in public places. Its members in 1904 included Dr. Peterson, Howard Cary, Ali Briggs, Ed, Boyum, Morris Scott, Linn Cooper, Howard Clayton, Joe Ritter, Howard Shear, Pruis Buch, C. C. Cary, Herbert Hoag, Fred Buch, M. B. English,<sup>39</sup> Roy Perry, and Ray T. Mitchell.

In addition to the organizations previously mentioned Jennings sponsored a Lawn Tennis Club. This club was chartered in 1910 and amply served the recreational and social needs of its members.<sup>40</sup> The Jennings

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<sup>35</sup> Jennings Daily Record, February 10, 1902.

<sup>36</sup> Jennings Daily Times, October 29, 1901.

<sup>37</sup> Jennings Weekly Times-Record, September 18, 1903.

<sup>38</sup> Jennings Daily Record, February 27, 1902; May 16, 1902.

<sup>39</sup> Jennings Weekly Times-Record, May 6, 1904.

<sup>40</sup> Jennings Lawn Tennis Club Charter and By Laws (Jennings, Louisiana, April, 1910), pp. 1-6.



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Country Club with its fine clubhouse, was another center of recreation.

Most communities find it necessary to legislate against practices regarded as injurious to the public weal. Jennings was no exception in this respect. Especially during the period of boom were restraining ordinances deemed imperative. Games of chance were outlawed in 1888.<sup>42</sup> In 1889 a provision against betting was adopted.<sup>43</sup> Those prone to gamble evidently found some loop holed in these two ordinances for in 1892 a special law was passed expressly prohibiting the game of "craps".<sup>44</sup> From this date until 1920, the City Council passed three additional ordinances against gambling.<sup>45</sup>

In 1907 pamphlets were distributed among those interested in the breeding and selling of game cocks. It was entitled A Descriptive Catalogue and advertised such varieties as Blue Red Federals, Brown Red Shufflers and Prairie Eagles, all bred in Jennings.<sup>46</sup> The publication of such a catalogue probably marked the zenith of cock fighting in Jennings. It also spelt the doom of the sport, for in the same year the city council declared fighting to be illegal.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Jennings Daily Times-Record, January 12, 1913.

<sup>42</sup> Ordinance Book, pp. 18-20.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>45</sup> Municipal Minutes, p. 26; Ordinance Book, pp. 319, 326.

<sup>46</sup> A Descriptive Catalogue (Jennings, Louisiana, 1907), pp. 1-14.

<sup>47</sup> Municipal Minutes, p. 162.





The problem of licensed saloons was continually before the Jennings people. Elections were called frequently to decide the question of wet or dry. The smallest governmental unit allowed to vote on such questions was the Parish Ward. Soon after its conception the city government ordered all drinking houses closed at 11 p.m.<sup>48</sup> On January 1, 1889, after a duly held election, the first ordinance was passed outlawing the sale of intoxicating liquors.<sup>49</sup> The wets went to work immediately and on September 14, 1889,<sup>50</sup> the saloons were reopened. The drys mustered their forces and early in the 1890's<sup>51</sup> again closed the saloons.

It was several years before the wets could stage a comeback, but by December, 1900, they had obtained enough supporters to reopen the saloons.<sup>52</sup> Dissension over the problem evidently extended into the city council. Early in 1901 Mayor Twitchell called a meeting of that body for the purpose of dealing with the city's whiskey interests. When the purpose of the meeting was announced, one of the councilmen immediately withdrew, leaving the body without a quorum.<sup>53</sup> As in the past, the drys again showed their ability quickly to regain control. After six months of

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<sup>48</sup> Ordinance Book, p. 53.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>53</sup> City Record, p. 21.



operation the saloons were closed a third time.

The city council was obligated to pass a new ordinance after each election either outlawing or licensing the saloons, depending on the dictates of the voters. Shortly after passing one ordinance in 1901 to close the saloons, the councilmen found it defective and passed a more binding one.

The oil boom brought a general disregard for the prohibition then existing. The city officials, reluctant to enforce the liquor ordinance, incurred criticisms from some citizens for not closing the "blind tigers."<sup>56</sup> One citizen wrote to the editor of the Daily Record, stating that he knew of eight such illegal establishments in operation. He asked the pertinent question as to why they were not closed.<sup>57</sup> As a result of these criticisms the city council was aroused to action. One man on being arrested for illegal sale of liquor was fined \$50.00 and \$10.00 costs.<sup>58</sup>

The town's prohibitionists being dissatisfied with the lax enforcement of the anti-liquor statutes formed a "Special Law and Order League" and prepared to carry out the law themselves if necessary. Through an accomplice, they caught one of the "blind Tiger" operators selling liquor. Before they could effect an arrest the town marshal, C. Brooks, appeared on the scene and took in custody league officers, thus allowing

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<sup>54</sup> Ordinance Book, p. 148.

<sup>55</sup> City Record, p. 64; New Orleans Times-Democrat, September 18, 1907.

<sup>56</sup> Jennings Daily Record, March 10, 1902. A "blind tiger" was considered to be any place selling liquor during periods of prohibition.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., March 11, 1902.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., March 21, 1902.





the law breaker to escape. This action met with disfavor among the people and city officials. Marshall Brooks could not be dismissed by the city council since his was an elective office. However, the councilmen did control his salary. A law was immediately passed making his pay \$1.00 per month, with a view to forcing his resignation.<sup>60</sup> Not until the governor acted in the city's behalf was the marshall disposed of.

These were indeed troublesome times for the city. While the council had been busy attempting to enforce the law, the vets, whose ranks were increased with the coming of oil, had secured and won an election repealing prohibition.<sup>61</sup>

The city council in 1906 amended the liquor license ordinance by raising the taxes on saloons. A business grossing from \$15,000 to \$25,000 a year was required to pay an annual city tax aggregating \$2,750; a \$10,000 to \$15,000 business was required to pay \$2,500; a \$5,000 to \$10,000 business, \$2,250; and a \$1,000 to \$5,000 business, \$2,000.<sup>62</sup>

The saloons remained open during the height of the oil activity. The boom had definitely passed after 1908. In the absence of the type of people that come with a boom, the citizens of Jennings were again able to inaugurate prohibition. Thus on January 1, 1909, the saloons were closed by law.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., March 15, 1902.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., May 17, 1902.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., July 25, 1902.

<sup>62</sup> Jennings Weekly Times-Record, November 2, 1906.

<sup>63</sup> Ordinance Book, p. 234.



et and dry, finally compromised their differences by allowing the sale  
of malt liquors containing not more than 2 per cent alcohol. This agree-  
ment was made law by an ordinance which set up the following city tax  
rate: a business of \$5,000 to \$10,000 paid \$75.00 a year; one over \$10,000  
paid \$100.00 and one under \$5,000 paid \$50.00. <sup>64</sup> Here the issue rested  
until national prohibition came into effect.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 328.



## CHAPTER IV

### RICE CULTURE

The Louisiana natives in the Jennings area had been cultivating rice along the bayous and streams for many years prior to the arrival of the mid-westerners. Within a decade after their entrance into southwest Louisiana the new settlers completely revolutionized rice culture. Here, modern machinery was employed for the first time on a grand scale. The rice fields of the world, including those of the United States, had been cultivated by hand. Southwest Louisiana was the site also of the first use of commercial irrigation.

The first rice growers utilized methods commonly called Providence culture. The natives plowed and sowed an area of land along a gully or marias. This activity alone constituted their labors until harvest time. If Providence sent the proper amount of rain at the proper time, a good harvest was forthcoming; otherwise their work came to naught.<sup>1</sup> But since Providence was more often kind than not, the natives usually had a plentiful harvest.<sup>2</sup>

All harvesting was accomplished by hand. The cradle, a kind of sickle, was used to cut the rice. Threshing was done by flailing a handful

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<sup>1</sup> Jennings Louisiana Rice Journal, August, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.





of rice stalks across the top of a barral causing the seed to fall inside  
of the barral. The process was continued until all the crop had been  
threshed.<sup>3</sup> The milling process was about as crude as the sowing, harvesting  
and threshing. A mortar and postle were used to break the chaff away from  
the grain.<sup>4</sup> Then a large basket was used to winnow the chaff from the  
grain. Newcomers to the area at first had trouble making the rice grain  
fall back into the basket instead of on the ground. They soon became ex-  
perts once the Acadians showed them how to overcome this difficulty and  
winnowing became a relatively simple process.<sup>5</sup>

The farmers who came to Jennings from the Mid-West were not con-  
tent to use such antiquated methods of agriculture. They had been accus-  
tomed to scientific farming for some years and those among them who were  
wheat farmers were well acquainted with the modern methods and machines  
such as the twine binder and thresher. With such a background of experience  
and knowledge of agriculture, they immediately took steps to transform rice  
from a Providence crop to one of stability, based on mechanical processes.<sup>6</sup>

In 1884 Maurice Bryan brought a twine binder to Jennings.<sup>7</sup>  
This binder was intended for wheat, but the people reasoned that it should

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>4</sup> After the chaff was broken from the grain by the use of the mortar and pestle, the contents were thrown in the air, allowing the wind to carry off the light chaff and the heavier grain fell back into the basket. This process is called winnowing.

<sup>5</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.

<sup>6</sup> Jennings Times, April 24, 1902.

<sup>7</sup> Louisiana Rice Book, p. 102.



work in the harvest of rice as it did in wheat. Some rice was cut with this machine during the first season but the results were not satisfactory because, unlike wheat which is harvested on dry soil, rice frequently had to be cut on muddy ground, as was the case this particular year. It seems that most of the trouble came from the fact that the bull wheel could not get traction in the mud thus failing to drive the sickle, reel, and caurasses. Bryan, not to be discouraged, immediately went to work to adapt this wheat binder to the rice fields. After a series of unsuccessful experiments with various devices, he hit upon the invention of <sup>8</sup> spades to the bull wheel. This eliminated all slipping, regardless of the mud. With the adaptation of the wheat binder, the harvesting of rice on a large scale was possible.

The next problem was irrigation utilizing a controllable water supply. In this the first step was the damming of the gulleys, thus providing a reservoir of water which was used with some success in irrigating the crop. The dams were constructed so that the back waters of the gulleys would flood out over the flats. A similar method was used in the Carolina rice fields by utilizing the water brought in by the rivers at high tide. This method had its limitations in that it could not cover a very large <sup>9</sup> area.

The advent of irrigation on a large and controllable scale came in 1895. On March 22, 1895, the first irrigation company was organized as

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<sup>8</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.





the Riverside Irrigation Company.

This and other larger irrigation companies distributed their water through a system of canals. The pumping stations were located on streams or bayous of inexhaustible water supply. The water was pumped up to a high level into a man-made canal and then started on its way through the fields. The large canals were built by throwing up two parallel ridges, forming a trough with its bottom higher than the surrounding ground. The individual farmer tapped on to this large canal by smaller canals or laterals; these carried the water to the highest point of his

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land, thus insuring complete coverage.

Some of the first pumping plants were capable of lifting 90,000 gallons of water a minute. They usually worked night and day from June to August to give the proper irrigation. The pioneer companies were quickly followed by others. Among the earliest plants were the McFarlain Irrigation Company, the Tip Top Grand Canal Company, the Lacassine Company,<sup>12</sup> and the Mayville Company. The pumping stations operated by the irrigation companies used steam power and employed wood as a fuel to fire the boilers. In the earliest days the centrifugal pump with a discharge of not more than twelve inches was used; and sometimes as many as five pumps were in operation from one power source. Of interesting note is the fact that Greeks,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. A. D. McFarlain had first used the canal system later developed and expanded by the irrigation companies. His canal was rather small and was operated in conjunction with the sawmill that he owned on Bayou Nezpique. See ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Jennings Times, April 24, 1902.

<sup>12</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.



who came from New Orleans, were generally used for firing the plants'  
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boilers.

In their first seasons of operation it was with some difficulty that the companies were able to secure right-of-ways across the fields for their supply canals, as many of the farmers were somewhat skeptical of this method of irrigation. After overcoming this obstacle there remained the question of what the water fee should be. Naturally the irrigation companies had to show a profit. The first rate was placed at two sacks of rice per acre serviced. This was soon discovered to be unreasonable as it did not take into consideration the yield of the land for that particular season. If a farmer for any one of various reasons should have a poor crop, he was still obligated to pay the same rate as one who had a bumper crop. This system of a flat rental was replaced by a share crop on the acres serviced, but this was later reduced to one-fifth.  
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The elaborate canal system was not the last word in irrigation. Although the system worked satisfactorily and serviced a large area, there were still lands otherwise suited for rice agriculture which were inaccessible to the supply canals. About the time the canal system came into being, "Father" Cary conceived the idea of irrigation by means of deep wells. Acting in accordance with his idea, he found that water was abundant at some 125 feet to 200 feet below the surface. Cary then began work on a project to make this type of water supply available to all the rice

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13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.



farmers. Dr. Remage, "Father" cary and Mr. Maurice Bryan put down the  
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first wells on their farms in 1898. The water supply was plentiful  
enough but it was soon found that the quicksand clogged the wells and cut  
off the water. During the period of experimentation with this problem,  
"Father Cary and his son C. C. Carry made a trip to Storm Lake, Iowa, to  
observe the methods used there in operating wells. This proved to be of  
little value as the operation of wells in Iowa was too expensive for use  
16  
in the rice fields.

Shortly after the trip to Storm Lake, a farmer from Iowa came  
to the rice fields with a promising scheme of overcoming the quicksand;  
this involved the use of a pipe eight to ten inches in diameter with holes  
drilled in the botton section. This device proved only temporarily suc-  
cessful, however, as after one winter the well became clogged again.  
Still another method employed was the wrapping of wire around the bottom  
section of pipe containing holes so that it resembled a large sieve.  
This also brought improvement for a time, byt after one or two years the  
quicksand would cut off the water flow. The solution finally was found  
by two men simultaneously, F. I. Getty of Jennings, and Layne of Tennessee,  
both of whom received a patent for a screen applicator. This applicator,  
which was constructed in such a manner as to prevent clogging of the screen,  
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allowed the flow of liquid byt kept out the quicksand.

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<sup>15</sup> Jennings Semi-Weekly News, April 27, 1926; Cary, History from  
Ancient to Modern.

<sup>16</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.

<sup>17</sup> Getty later developed a similar applicator for use in the  
Jennings oil field.





Throughout the development of the irrigation process, rapid strides were being made in other phases of the rice industry, particularly in regard to the preparation of the ground, sowing, harvesting and threshing. The threshing process introduced by the midwesterners was essentially the same as that used for wheat and required only a few modifications in the machinery. William Deering and Son, the farm implement concern, sent the first large shipment of rice threshing machinery into southwest Louisiana from Chicago in 1889 by a special train composed of twenty-two freight cars bearing, three hundred machines. The train, gaily bedecked with flags and bunting, was welcomed at every southwest Louisiana station with cheers and celebration. The machines proved extremely successful and many more<sup>18</sup> were ordered in succeeding years. By the late 1890's the farmers had introduced the drill, gangplow, disk harrow and broadcast, all of which had been used in the culture of wheat. These innovations decreased the cost of production and enabled the small farmer to cultivate a larger<sup>19</sup> area.

Progress of the rice industry during the early years was impressive. In 1884 there were approximately 1,000 acres planted in rice in the Jennings area. By 1890 this acreage had increased to about 9,000 acres. In 1889, twenty-six carloads of rice were shipped out of the Jennings area;<sup>20</sup> in 1890, one hundred carloads; and in 1891, four hundred carloads.

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<sup>18</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 28, 1930.

<sup>19</sup> Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture, 1899 (Washington, D. C., 1900), p. 63. Cited hereafter as Yearbook.

<sup>20</sup> Perrin, Southwest Louisiana, p. 139. By the Jennings area is meant that bounded by the China postoffice on the north, Grand Marias on the west, Lake Arthur on the south, and Bayou Nezpieque on the east. See Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 28, 1930.



Binders increased from one in 1884 to over two thousand binders in 1891.

The full effect of this industrial revolution in the rice industry can be gleaned from a comparison of figures on rice acreage over a twenty year period. In 1879, 42,000 acres of rice were cultivated in the state; in 1889, 84,377 acres were devoted to rice; and in 1899, there were 201,685  
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acres of rice.

During the period in which the methods of rice culture were being revolutionized, only slight attention was paid to varieties in the Louisiana fields. One particular fault of the Honduras type then being cultivate was that it sustained such a large per cent of breakage in the milling process. This considerably reduced the market value of the crop. In an effort to solve this problem Dr. S. A. Knapp, president of the Rice Association of America and a resident of Lake Charles, Louisiana, with the assistance of the United States Department of Agriculture, visited Japan for research in oriental rice species. In 1898 Knapp imported the Kiushu variety from Japan and sponsored its successful adaptation to the Louisiana  
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rice fields.

The use of the Kiushu variety added hundreds of thousands of  
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dollars to the profit of the Louisiana rice growers. The overall results

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<sup>21</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 28, 1930.

<sup>22</sup> William B. Lindsay, "Marketing of Louisiana Rice," M.A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1939.

<sup>23</sup> Yearbook, 1900 p. 33.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 1899, p. 63.





achieved by this adaptation was summed up by Dr. Knaapp in his report to the Secretary of Agriculture in 1900:

This year has thoroughly proved the superiority of the Kiushu rice in every way. Under favorable conditions, the yield is on an average fully 30 per cent more than that of Honduras or South Carolina (the ordinary varieties). Under unfavorable conditions Kiushu rice yields from 100 to 400 per cent more than any other rice. It yielded this year four or five barrels per acre without any water except rain. The Honduras rice grown under the same conditions produced nothing. The straw is so tough that the seeds will not whip off in a storm. It mills 30 to 50 percent more head rice (unbroken grains) than the Honduras. The department never spent money that helped the country more than that spent in the importation of this Japanese rice. It has brought about the opening up and development of an extensive region in southwest Louisiana and southeast Texas, where the land was not previously of any value except for cattle grazing. It has resulted in the investment of probably \$20,000,000. It has increased the production of rice in Louisiana more than \$1,000,000 per annum. Rice now has a future in the United States second only to wheat.<sup>25</sup>

Progress in rice culture was paralleled by development in milling. In the early 1890's H. L. Cary built the first rice mill in Jennings.<sup>26</sup> The Jennings Rice Milling Company with G. H. Morse as president and C. S. Morse, secretary-manager, constructed its plant in 1895.<sup>27</sup> The pelican Rice Milling Company, opening in the 1890's installed its own electric light plant.<sup>28</sup> By 1902 nine rice mills and irrigation companies, three of which were located in Jennings, were serving the prairie

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 1900, p. 33.

<sup>26</sup> Jennings Daily Times-Record, December 31, 1904.

<sup>27</sup> Souvenir, 1903, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Jennings Beacon, November 29, 1899.



rice belt. These nine concerns were capitalized at \$757,000, while the<sup>29</sup>  
three in Jennings had a total capitalization of \$330,000. By 1903  
these companies were operating 20 main canals and 200 deep wells in the<sup>30</sup>  
rice fields surrounding Jennings.

Jennings also became a center for promotion of rice development  
in southeast Texas, a country very similar to that of southwest Louisiana.  
In 1902 the Texas Rice Development Company, owning 19,300 acres of land  
in Texas, organized in Jennings, began to advertise for rice farmers to<sup>31</sup>  
buy land and get the industry started.

In the 1890's the Rice Association of America was formed. At  
its first meeting, held in Crowley, general policies in support of the<sup>32</sup>  
rice industry and in behalf of the rice planters were established.  
Another promotional step, designed specifically for increasing the domestic  
consumption of rice, was the preparation of an exhibit known as the  
Louisiana Rice Kitchen for display at the pan-American and Louisiana<sup>33</sup>  
purchase Exposition. The New Orleans Board of Trade also contributed  
to the rice planters' interest by undertaking the task of introducing rice<sup>34</sup>  
into Cuba.

The discovery of oil in the Jennings area, instead of impinging

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<sup>29</sup> Jennings Daily Record, January 14, 1902.

<sup>30</sup> Souvenir, 1903, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Jennings Daily Record, May 27, 1902.

<sup>32</sup> Jennings Daily Times, November 22, 1901.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., October 22, 1901.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., October 24, 1901.



on the rice industry, as might have been feared, served rather to aid it by attracting greater interest and attention. Many rice farmers invested money in oil stocks while continuing to cultivate rice; some deemed rice more profitable than oil. One rice grower stated that he had an oil well in the form of five hundred acres of rice which netted him \$24,000 annually.

As might be expected one result of the discovery of oil was a decided increase in land values. Rice land which in November, 1901, was worth from \$10 to \$15 an acre a year later was selling for \$20 and  
36  
acre. In January, 1902, land on the Mamou Prairie, where oil was discovered, was selling for about \$20 an acre; one tract of 320 acres selling for \$6,400. Other tracts sold at \$25 to \$30 an acre.

The rice industry was emphasized also when the Southern Pacific railroad furthered its advertising program in 1902 by sending six hundred to one thousand immigration agents north to bring settlers to the Louisiana and Texas rice lands. These new settlers after purchasing their land could install a well with irrigation facilities for about 200 acres for  
38  
\$1,500 to \$2,500.

In 1890 Calcasieu Parish produced approximately 5,985,755 pounds

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<sup>35</sup> Jennings Daily Times, October 3, 1901.

<sup>36</sup> Jennings Daily Record, November 2, 1901.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., January 3, 1902.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., January 16, 1902.

<sup>39</sup> Jennings Times, April 24, 1902.





or rice making it the fourth largest rice producing parish in the state. Much of this was produced in the Jennings area. By 1900 Calcasieu had become the second largest producer with 32,990,143 pounds of rice to its credit. This amounted to eleven percent of the national yield.<sup>41</sup> The 1910 reports, given in bushels, placed Calcasieu Parish as the number one rice producer with 4,111,621 bushels. This was almost fifty per cent of the state yield and double the amount of the next ranking parish.<sup>42</sup>

According to the 1920 report, Jefferson Davis Parish was the second largest producer of rice. In 1919 its fields yielded three million bushels of rough rice.<sup>43</sup> The following table gives the rice production in Louisiana from 1909 to 1920. This table should be examined with Plate Number I in order to understand Jennings' relation to the Louisiana rice fields.

44  
TABLE I

Year	Acres Harvested in Thousands	Production in Thousands of Bushels
1909	370	12,617
1910	360	13,320
1911	350	11,725
1912	315	11,182
1913	350	11,200
1914	370	11,520
1915	385	12,898
1916	435	20,010
1917	485	16,005
1918	565	18,030
1919	543	19,005
1920	636	25,012

<sup>40</sup> Eleventh Census of the United States, 1890, p. 148.

<sup>41</sup> Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Part II, p. 57.

<sup>42</sup> Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Vol. VI, pp. 690, 691.

<sup>43</sup> Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Vol. VI, Part II, p. 593.

<sup>44</sup> Production of Rice, United States Department of Agriculture, p. 1.



The creation of a large rice industry in the southwest ultimately resulted in domestic consumption being supplied by American rice fields. These newly created fields also aided the United States in becoming an exporter of rice. The transition from importer to exporter came in 1905 when the net exports amounted to forty-one million pounds. In 1906 the net exports were forty-three million pounds and in 1907<sup>45</sup> they were sixty-one million pounds.<sup>46</sup> By 1913 the net exports had reached two billion pounds.<sup>47</sup>

With in seven years after its creation in 1919 Jefferson Davis Parish had come to be one of the richest agricultural districts in the state. Its farm property was valued at \$22,770,016, ranking fourth in the state. Of the 1,163 farms in the parish over half were less than 175<sup>47</sup> acres with the majority of these owned by the farmers who tilled them.

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<sup>45</sup> Yearbook, 1907, p. 18.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 1915, p. 487.

<sup>47</sup> Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Vol. VI, Part II, p. 598.





GRAM'S  
8½ x 11 Outline Map  
LOUISIANA

SCALE  
0 10 20 30 40 MILES

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## CHAPTER V

### The Oil Industry

The discovery of oil in Jennings, to be fully understood, must be projected against the background of the oil industry at that time in the nation as a whole.

America's first oil was discovered in Pennsylvania about the middle of the nineteenth century. By 1901 the Appalachian and Lima-<sup>1</sup> Indiana fields were producing eighty per cent of the nation's oil. The use of oil was still limited. Many of the businessmen who were in a position to use oil in industry were skeptical of doing so because of fear of exhausting the available supply and thus requiring reconversion to a new fuel.

Then in 1901 came the great discovery of the Spindletop Field at Beaumont, Texas. After the first well was brought in the entire area immediately became a scene of intensive speculation. Wells were sunk with unheard of rapidity. In some instances hastily organized companies secured leases on plots of only twenty square feet, this being the minimum<sup>2</sup> area required for erection of a derrick. Still more amazing were the one-

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<sup>1</sup> Mineral Resources of the United States, 1901, 57th Congress, 1st Session, House Document No. 17 (Washington, 1902), p. 526.

<sup>2</sup> Heywood, "Autobiography", Oil (June, 1941), p. 21.



square-yard tracts leased on the summit of Spindletop hill; in working these minute plots it was necessart to borrow derrick space from neighboring owners.<sup>3</sup>

The activity in Beaumont at the Spindletop Field reawakened an interest in oil throughout the whole southwest region. For years it had been a common thing to observe bubbles coming from the marsh waters in southwest Louisiana.<sup>4</sup> But with few exceptions, no positive action had been taken. In 1893 a German homesteader brought gass seepage in the Jennings area to the attention of T. C. Mahaffey. Mahaffey being from Pennsylvania where gass and oil wells were common immediately assumed that this seepage an indication of the presence of oil. Mahaffey had the homesteader ignite the gas, which burned for a considerable length of time. This experiment served to further Mahaffey's hunch that oil was present. He wrote to a friend in Ohio, whom he knew to be familiar with oil formations, asking for a diagnosis of the conditions observed. The friend<sup>5</sup> answered that Mahaffey had found marsh gas which was of no value.

Mahaffey was not the only person who thought that oil might be present in Louisiana. In the same year of Mahaffey's investigations a man destined to become an authority on oil in the southwest began prospecting.

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<sup>3</sup> Gerald Forbes, Flush Production (Norman, Oklahoma, 1942), p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Sometime between 1821 and 1825 oil was struck four times in the process of drilling a water well on the Bermuda Plantation near Cane River, in Natchitoches Parish. Forbes in Flush Production states that the significance of the oil struck here has been exaggerated. Another instance of oil activity was recalled in 1901 by a Jennings lawyer. He drew attention to the fact that some thirty years previous an oil company had been organized for the purpose of working tracts believed to contain oil. See Jennings Daily Times, November 1, 1901.

<sup>5</sup> Interview of T. C. Mahaffey by the writer January 25, 1948.





This man was Captain Anthony Lucas, a mining engineer who from 1893 to 1899 searched intensively but in vain for oil in south Louisiana. After this period of fruitless activity he went to Beaumont and began the development of the Spindletop lease.<sup>6</sup> He worked on this lease until 1901, when he brought in the first well, the famous Spindletop Number One.

In 1901, prior to the Jennings development, W. Scott Heywood of Spindletop Number Two fame in Texas, came to Louisiana prospecting for oil. Heywood was experienced in the oil industry having brought in wells both in California and Texas. Apparently he was by nature a wildcat operator in the oil industry. Even though he was secure in his position at the Spindletop Field, he had a great desire to discover a large field of his own. When he heard of gas seepage on Hackberry Island in Cameron Parish, which is in the extreme southwestern part of Louisiana, he contacted a land owner and attempted to make a deal for an oil lease. To his great surprise he was told that "no damned blue blooded yankee could lease any land on this island."<sup>7</sup> He was further told that it would be very unhealthy for him to be found on the island after nine o'clock the next morning. Heywood returned to Beaumont feeling that Louisiana was not a likely place in which to prospect.

In the spring of 1901 five businessmen of Jennings began acquiring leases on the Mamou Prairie, seven miles northeast of town. These men were I. D. Williams, S.A. Spencer, Dr. A.C. Wilkins, T. C. Mahaffey and J. R. Jaenke.<sup>8</sup> Spurred on by the developments in Beaumont, they immediately

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<sup>6</sup> Forbes, Flush Production, pp. 16, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Heywood, "Autobiography", Oil (June, 1941), pp. 21, 22.

<sup>8</sup> Jennings Times, April 24, 1902.



sought someone capable of putting down a well on one of their leases. The actions of this group are best explained by S. A. Spencer as he recalled them in 1907:

After the leases were taken, we spent about \$2,000 more, and we paid our different proportions, and then, as we were not oil men, we decided to see if we could not interest some parties in Beaumont in the hole we had, and Mr. Williams and myself went to Beaumont, and the first oil man we met was Mr. Scott Heywood. They Heywood brothers were very successful men, had operated successfully at Spindle Top, and they were prominent and attracted our attention. We met him at the hotel, and told him we had leases of large tracts of land--between 4,000 and 5,000 acres--in Acadia Parish, on what they call "Momou Prairie", and which had a gas seepage on one place which, for certain tests, had gotten certain results, and judging from what we read in the papers about the Beaumont or Spindle Top, oil field, these were indications that would induce practical oil men to come in with us.<sup>9</sup>

Heywood, clated over this possibility of pioneering a new field, followed Spencer back to Jennings. He quickly observed that the topography was in general likened to that of Spindletop. He ignited the gas and found that it burned a red flame which gave off smoke. This condition  
10  
convinced him that the gas was petroleum gas.

On April 29, 1901, Heywood signed a contract with S. A. Spencer and company. This contract provided that Heywood would organized the Jennings Oil Company and that the S. A. Spencer and company would deed to the Jennings Oil Company and forty acres of land out of their holdings which Heywood chose to designate, The contract further provided that the Jennings Oil Company would contract with Heywood brothers and Dobbins to

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<sup>9</sup> Jennings-Heywood Oil Syndicate v. Houssiere-Latreille Oil Company. 119 Louisiana 793, pp. 811, 812.

<sup>10</sup> Heywood, "Autobiography", Oil (June, 1941), p. 22.





drill two wells, each 1,000 feet deep. The Jennings Oil Company was to be capitalized at \$60,000 with 60,000 shares at a par value of \$1 a share. The company sold thirty thousand shares of this stock for operating capital. The remainder of the stock went to J. A. Spencer and company in payment for the forty acres of land deeded to the Jennings Oil Company. Heywood, after complying with his contract, was to receive fifteen thousand shares of the stock transferred to Spencer. In addition he was to receive one-half the acreage held by the Spencer Company. This acreage was to be checker boarded between Heywood and the Company.

Heywood chose a forty-acre tract under lease from Jules Clement on which to begin operations. When the latter was informed of this, he padlocked his gates and headed for the parish seat to see a lawyer. Owing to his limited knowledge of the oil industry, Clement could visualize his land being perforated by the oil drellers. He feared that this would constitute a hazard to his cattle causing them to stumble and break their legs. After some discussion, Heywood convinced the Farmer that at ten thousand dollars a hole very few would be drilled. He succeeded in pacifying Clement and gave him ten dollars, seven dollars more than was asked, to compensate for the damage that would be done to the rice in the immediate vicinity of the first well.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> E. L. Hagstette, "Louisiana's First Oil Field," Louisiana Conservation Review (Spring, 1939), pp. 11-13.

<sup>13</sup> Heywood, "Autobiography", Oil (June, 1941), pp. 21-24.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



On May 4, 1901, Heywood began operations on the Clement tract, at the same time the Crowley Oil and Mineral Company began work on the McDaniel tract which was just north of the Jennings Oil Company's site.<sup>15</sup> Drilling on the Clement tract continued steadily until a depth of four hundred feet was reached. At this point the string of ten-inch pipe used in the operation twisted off. This mishap necessitated moving the derrick over a few feet and starting on a new hole.<sup>16</sup> The drillers, Dobbins and Noble, under the supervision of Scott Heywood, continued operations until a depth of approximately one thousand feet had been reached. While at times indications of oil had been very apparent, the drilling had to be suspended owing to the nature of the contract.<sup>17</sup>

The company's officials and stockholders were keenly disappointed and somewhat in a dilemma as to what should be done. The drilling contract called for the second well to be started within thirty days after the completion of the first. The company was reluctant to start a new well which from all indications would be another dry hole. The solution finally came when it was proposed that the second well be drilled on top of the first, thus permitting extension of the well already begun to a depth of two thousand feet.<sup>18</sup> When the new operation had reached a depth of fifteen hundred feet without striking oil many of the stockholders lost faith.

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<sup>15</sup> Jennings-Heywood Oil Syndicate v. Hossiere-Latreille Oil Company. 119 Louisiana 793.

<sup>16</sup> Jennings Times, April 24, 1902.

<sup>17</sup> Heywood, "Autobiography", Oil (June, 1941), pp. 21-24.

<sup>18</sup> Jennings Times, April 24, 1902.



Stock which had cost fifty cents a share was offered for sale at one-half that price. However, Scott Heywood persisted in continuing the drilling<sup>19</sup> even against the advice of two of his brothers.

On September 18, 1901, the New Orleans Times-Democrat first reported on the oil activities in the Jennings field. The article stated that the well was flowing, causing a great deal of excitement in Jennings. Everyone wanted to see the operations going on in the field especially when the report of oil in quantity reached the town. On that day not enough<sup>20</sup> transportation to carry the people to the field could be found. Despite the beginning of an oil flow, drilling was continued, and on September 21, 1901, a depth of 1832 feet had been reached, the well came in as a gusher sending up a four-inch column of oil almost to the top of the derrick.<sup>21</sup> The gush continued for a period of about five minutes.

This long awaited demonstration was suddenly cut off when the sand choked up the lower thousand feet of casing. Striking a fine, floury sand formation was a new experience to the oil operators. They believed that by cleaning out the well a few times a cavity would form around the<sup>22</sup> den of the casing thus allowing the uninterrupted flow of oil. Many long hours of anxious labor were spent before they found that this was not to be the case. The sandy formation in this region being different from that usually encountered, required new tactics.

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<sup>19</sup> Heywood, "Autobiography", Oil (June, 1941), pp. 21-24.

<sup>20</sup> New Orleans Times-Democrat, September 18, 1901.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., September 21, 1901.

<sup>22</sup> Heywood, "Autobiography", Oil (June, 1941), pp. 21-24.





This sprouting of oil soon spread the fame of Jennings as a petroleum area. Speculators and landseekers flocked to the site of the new discovery. Since Jennings was the headquarters of the successful pioneer venture and was the colsest town of any size to the new field, it became the center of expanding oil interests and activities. Within a week after the well came in a passenger conductor on the Southern Pacific reported that Jennings and oil were the leading topics of conversation among his travelers. Thus Jennings became the best advertised town between New Orleans and Houston.

Every arriving train brought more visitors to the oil community. Sometimes as many as a thousand people would be at the well waiting for developments. Many of these were Jennings people but some were speculators from Beaumont, New Orleans, Houston, Dallas, St. Louis and other places. In the town hotels and lodging houses were crowded to capacity. Lodging prices had not advanced as late as the 25th of September, despite a great scarcity of rooms. Food prices rose sharply soon after the well came in, but this did not prevent restaurants from doing a booming business.

Real estate agents were very numerous, listing their bargains on large blackboards which were displayed on every corner in the town. Some typical listings were: "choice tract within half a mile of the well," "fifty acres within four miles of the husher," "few shares of Jennings Oil Stock or \$3, today only," "choice tract close to the husher sell whole or any

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<sup>23</sup> New Orleans Times-Democrat, September 24, 1901.

<sup>24</sup> Jennings Daily Times, September 27, 1901.

<sup>25</sup> New Orleans Times-Democrat, September 27, 1901.



part," and "city property at a bargain to right party." <sup>26</sup> The land for sale at these "bargain" offers was usually well outside the limits of the field. The land near the well soared to dizzy heights, the Jennings Oil Company refusing \$5,000 for one acre of the Clement tract. <sup>27</sup>

It soon became a daily routine for the people to make at least one trip a day to the well to check on the work in progress, and many of the visitors took small bottles of oil away with them as souvenirs. <sup>28</sup>

Companies soon formed to provide transportation to and from the well. A frequent advertisement read, "If you want to spend a pleasant Sunday take Cullen's hack to the oil field." <sup>29</sup>

The oil discovery came during rice harvest season. C. C. Duson, a Crowley promoter, stated that the farmers were completing the harvest as rapidly as possible in order to turn their attention to the oil business. <sup>30</sup>

As might be expected the boom attracted a number of undesirables. Concerning these an editorial in the local paper stated:

There is a good number of loungers and idlers hanging around the corners today, especially around the depot. This morning a business man was heard to offer some of these

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., September 28, 1901.

<sup>27</sup> Jennings Daily Times, September 27, 1901. In December the Southern Oil Company paid \$31,500 for 6 3/4 acres from the Jennings-Heywood Oil Syndicate's holdings.

<sup>28</sup> New Orleans Times-Democrat, September 28, 1901.

<sup>29</sup> Jennings Daily Times, October 5, 1901.

<sup>30</sup> New Orleans Times-Democrat, September 28, 1901.





loungers twenty cents per hour to work. Their reply was, "We don't care to work." Some of them are filthy and dirty and not fit to appear in public. We have a great many visitors in town now, and we should make it appear to advantage.<sup>31</sup>

After the small gushing on September 21, the bailing process continued in an attempt to unchoke the well. Scott Heywood made a trip to Beaumont in order to secure a marine bailer better adapted to perform the job. The local papers, while keeping in close touch with the well's activity, frequently displayed their inexperience with oil reporting. For example the marine bailer was repeatedly referred to by such incorrect names as "moran" or "morean" bailer.<sup>32</sup>

While various expedients for unchoking the pipe were being tried, the gusher came in. On October 7, just before noon, the oil gushed to a height of seventy-five or eighty feet. This continued for seven hours. The people who happened to be at the well were so awed by this display of nature that no one thought of carrying the news to the city. Not until 7:30 p.m. did word reach Jennings concerning the gusher.<sup>33</sup> Then the people momentarily went wild, some shouting with joy. Those who came in from the well were required to relate their observations over and over again to increasingly larger audiences.<sup>34</sup>

The scene at the well the next morning was one of utter chaos. The oil had demolished the engine shed and many boards were torn off the derrick. Oil sand covered the derrick floor, coating the tools and equip-

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<sup>31</sup> Jennings Daily Times, September 27, 1901.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., October 3, 1901.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., October 8, 1901.

<sup>34</sup> New Orleans Times-Democrat, October 8, 1901.



ment, and a great lake of oil surrounded the well.<sup>35</sup> Even though this well proved that the Jennings field contained oil in quantity, the sand was never controlled and the well had to be abandoned.

Activity in the field was not confined to the Jennings Oil Company. By the latter part of October Dobbins was preparing to drill for the Prairie Mamou Company. The driller for Southern Oil Company had much equipment on hand. The Home Oil Company's driller was already seventy feet down. The Pelican Oil Company had ordered machinery from Beaumont, and the Union Oil Company was constructing its first derrick.<sup>36</sup>

At the close of 1901 there were four pumping wells in the field, one flowing well, four wells preparing to pump and two wells being drilled.<sup>37</sup> The oil was of a higher quality than that produced at Beaumont. During the year of the Jennings oil discovery, seventy-six oil companies were capitalized in Louisiana at an aggregate figure of \$44,063,000.<sup>38</sup> Twelve of these, in November, 1901, were domiciled in Jennings.<sup>39</sup>

The first wells of several of the early companies were non-productive.<sup>40</sup> Other wells came as pumpers rather than gushers. In the early part of 1902 the Southern Oil Company brought in an outstanding producer known as Southern Number Two.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Jennings Daily Times, October 9, 1901.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., October 23, 1901.

<sup>37</sup> Mineral Resources, 1901, pp. 561-568.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 529.

<sup>39</sup> Jennings Daily Record, November 2, 1901.

<sup>40</sup> Jennings Times, April 24, 1902.

<sup>41</sup> Jennings Daily Record, February 24, 1902.



A vital factor in the continuing success of this venture was the utilization for control of the sand of an applicator similar to that used in the water wells. Scott Heywood had realized the feasibility of using a screen while drilling his second well. As the Southern Number Two well was due in before his, he offered the Southern Company the use of his screen. The success which resulted proved conclusively that the Jennings field was a productive one.

In 1902 Fred I. Getty, a Jennings manufacturer, made marked improvements in the screen. From this time forward his screen was used<sup>42</sup> in bringing in every well in the field.

The Southern Oil Company's third well was the next large gusher in the field. Since so many people had missed seeing the display afforded by Jennings Number One, popular demand caused the president of Southern Oil Company to publish the following notice:

The Southern oil well number 3 will be turned loose and allowed to gush tomorrow afternoon at two o'clock, May 28. This exhibition will be for the express purpose of gratifying the curiosity of those who have not seen this well, and will not be repeated soon.

Southern Oil Company  
E. F. Rowson, President<sup>43</sup>

The populace which turned out in an estimated force of two to three thousand for the demonstration had the satisfaction of seeing a gush<sup>44</sup> that lasted for approximately fifteen minutes.

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<sup>42</sup> Heywood, "Autobiography", Oil (July, 1941), pp. 21-24.

<sup>43</sup> Jennings Daily Record, May 27, 1902.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., May 28, 1902.





After abandoning the Jennings Number One well, the Jennings Oil Company was reorganized to form the Jennings-Heywood Oil Syndicate. This new company immediately went to work on the Jennings Number Two well which came in as a gusher in June, 1902. In July this well was struck by lightning, causing the great fire with an estimated \$10,000 property damage. The well burned for six days and nights before the blaze was extinguished.

In 1902 the Jennings field produced and marketed 548,617 barrels of oil, the first marketed from Louisiana. Breakdown of the production by month was as follows:

May . . . . .	25,000 barrels
June . . . . .	60,000
July . . . . .	75,000
August . . . . .	92,894
September . . . . .	68,723
October . . . . .	81,259
November . . . . .	70,707
December . . . . .	75,036

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Total . . . . . 548,617

This output, comprising the state's total production for 1902, was sold at an average of \$.344 per barrel, and brought a total return of \$188,985.

In 1903 the field doubled its production with some of the com-

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., June 30, 1902.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., July 15, 1902.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., July 17, 1902.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., July 21, 1902.

<sup>49</sup> Mineral Resources, 1902, p. 568.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 539.



51

panies operating three to five wells. The largest land transaction in the history of the field took place in May, 1903, two investors paying \$96,000 for eithe acres of land in the Jennings pool. In 1904 the Field produced and marketed almost three million barrells, and in addition an estimated 3,670,000 barrels were produced but not sold, The oil not marketed was retained in earthen stroage tanks until the price advanced enough to warrant its sale.

The owners took utmost precaution in safeguarding the oil that was stored. Fences, watch towers, search lights and guards were employed to insure its safety. If such a large quantity of oil had caught fire, it not only would have inflicted a tremendous dollar loss but also could have destroyed the entire field.

Production increased steadily until the peak year of 1906, when a total production of over nine million barrels valued at \$3,525,879 was attained.

The Jennings Oil Refinery was established in the early years of the oil activity. After changing hands several times this establishment came under the management of the Royal Petroleum and Chemical Company. In 1906 this company put the refinery on full-scale production. Its chief

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<sup>51</sup> Souvenir, 1903, p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Jennings Southern Record, May 29, 1903.

<sup>53</sup> Mineral Resources, 1904, p. 710.

<sup>54</sup> Heywood, "Autobiography", Oil (July, 1941), pp. 21-24.

<sup>55</sup> Mineral Resources, 1906, p. 873.





commodity was alboleum, a white, tasteless and odorless product, with a variety of uses including that of ingredient for cold cream, salves and some medicines. It also proved an excellent agent for polishing rice as well as serving as a catalyst in the processing of commercial salt.

Other products of the refinery included terpene, naphthaline, and phenoles. 56

By the time the peak of production was reached the Jennings-Heywood Oil Syndicate was operating its thirty-fourth well, the Crowley Oil and Mineral Company its twenty-eighth, the Producers Oil Company its tenth and the Chicago-Jennings Oil Company its ninth. Other producers in the field were the Heywood Oil Company, The Heywood Brothers Oil Corporation, the Ziegler and Company, Evangeline Oil Company, T. H. Bass and Company and the Benckenstein and Frere Company. 57

The Heywood brothers with their many companies were the largest operators in the field. In addition to drilling they owned and operated a fleet of oil barges on the Mermentau River. These barges transported oil down the river to the Gulf, usually unloading at Morgan City. 58 The Heywood brothers were the first to build a pipe line from the field to the Jennings loading racks. 59 The line was completed and ready for service when the bringing in of Southern Number Two and Southern Number Three first provided oil in large quantity. 60

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<sup>56</sup> Souvenir, 1907, pp. 6-7.

<sup>57</sup> Jennings Weekly Times-Record, May 25, 1907.

<sup>58</sup> Heywood, "Autobiography", Oil (July, 1941), pp. 21-24.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. (June, 1941), pp. 22-24.

<sup>60</sup> Jennings Daily Record, May 26, 1902.



From 1902 to 1908 the Jennings pool produced almost one hundred per cent of the state's total production, but in the yeart following a marked decline was experienced. By 1921 it accounted for less than one percent of the total state production. <sup>61</sup> Figures showing production

by year for the period 1902 to 1921 are given in the table below.

62  
TABLE OF PRODUCTION OF OIL BY BARRELS

Year	Jennings	Louisiana
1902	548,617	548,617
1903	892,609	917,771
1904	2,905,527	2,941,419
1905	8,891,416	8,910,416
1906	9,025,174	9,077,528
1907	4,895,905	5,000,221
1908	5,111,577	5,788,874
1909	1,966,614	3,059,531
1910	1,625,159	6,641,395
1911	1,180,127	10,720,470
1912	1,105,711	9,263,439
1913	790,648	12,498,828
1914	412,036	14,309,435
1915	434,815	18,191,539
1916	516,674	15,248,138
1917	399,469	11,392,201
1918	369,000	16,043,000
1919	347,000	17,188,000
1920	232,000	35,714,000
1921	254,000	27,103,000

<sup>61</sup> Mineral Resources, 1921, p. 268.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 1901-1920.



## CHAPTER VI

### Conclusion

The basis of Jennings' economy is agriculture, with rice as its principal crop. This condition has prevailed from the town's founding to the present day. The mid-western people who settled throughout the southwest region, as well as in Jennings, were responsible for the scientific development of the rice crop. They completely revolutionized the industry by the introduction of methods and equipment heretofore unheard of in rice culture. Being the scene of the first oil activity in the state did not cause the farmers to forsake the cultivation of the land. <sup>1</sup> Actually the rice acreage increased during the years of this activity.

The Jennings oil development is unique in that the local citizens to a large extent maintained controlling interest. The Heywood brothers were the only outsiders who gained a controlling influence in any part of the field. But even this one exception did not result in absentee ownership. The Heywoods, after opening the Jennings field, sold <sup>2</sup> out their Texas interests and made Jennings their home.

Research has not revealed any evidence of a crime wave as a

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<sup>1</sup> Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Vol. VI, pp. 690-691.

<sup>2</sup> Heywood, "Autobiography", Oil (July, 1941), pp. 21-24.





result of the oil boom with its many and varied followers. The only possible exception was the disturbance concerning prohibition.<sup>3</sup>

There are possibly several reasons why the stability of law and order were not upset. In the first place, Jennings was an established municipality when the oil discovery was made, having the facilities and means for maintaining law and order. This was not the case with regard to a considerable number of the oil strikes in the country where the town was founded and oil was discovered simultaneously, with the establishment of civil government coming later. In the second place, the sudden arrival of a large body of people was not an uncommon occurrence for Jennings. Since the arrival of the first contingent of mid-westerners, the newcomers generally came in large groups. An old photograph (1892) shows approximately fifty newly arrived settlers being greeted by the citizens on one of the main street intersections.<sup>4</sup> In the third place, the Jennings field developed more slowly than other well-known fields. Not until the year 1905, four years after discovery, did the annual production exceed 5,000,000 barrells.<sup>5</sup> The Beaumont field produced that amount in the first year of operation.<sup>6</sup> Another comparison with the Beaumont field finds Jennings with five producing wells at the end of 1901, while Beaumont had brought in fourteen wells over a like period of time.<sup>7</sup> Moreover in the first ten

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<sup>3</sup> See page 45

<sup>4</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October 30, 1934.

<sup>5</sup> See page 77.

<sup>6</sup> Forbes, Flush Production, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Mineral Resources, 1901, pp. 561-568.



months of operation the Beaumont field produced sixty-seven gushers,<sup>8</sup>  
a figure never reached during the life of the Jennings pool.

The forgoing points are brought out in an effort to depict accurately the true situation in Jennings at the time of oil discovery and also to show the size and extent of the boom.

The Jennings field has continued to produce oil since its discovery. This field, along with others in southwest Louisiana, forms a limited but continuously productive oil area of which Jennings is the center. This accounts for the emergence of various ancillary industries near Jennings. Thus oil has provided predominantly agricultural Jennings with a more balanced economy.

<sup>8</sup> New Orleans Times-Democrat, October 14, 1901.

<sup>9</sup> Association of Commerce Statistics, Jennings, Louisiana.





## APPENDIX I

### Biographical Sketch of S. L. Cary

The son of U. R. and Sophia Streeter Cary was born in Boston, Erie County, New York, on February 22, 1827. He was one of three children. His brother John W. settled at Fort Scott, Kansas, and his<sup>1</sup> sister Udoria Cary at Spring Valley, Minnesota.

Young Cary received an academic education in the Boston common school. At the age of fourteen he began teaching. Cary taught school for two years before taking up a business career. At sixteen he accepted a position as clerk with Benjamin Fitch, the owner of a wholesale and<sup>2</sup> retail dry goods store in Buffals, New York.

At the age of twenty-one he set up his own mercantile business in Chantaugua county, New York. One year later he married Sully J. Medberry. Two children were born, a son and daughter. Both died in infancy. In 1835 his wife also passed away. Cary then sold out his business in New York and moved to Freeport, Illinois, with his parents.

Cary engaged in the mercantile business and farming in his new home. Soon after his arrival he married Clara F. Daniels of Dearborn, Michigan. To his second wife were born five children, four sons and one daughter.

---

<sup>1</sup> Perrin, Southwest Louisiana, pp. 145-146.

<sup>2</sup> Jennings Times, April 24, 1901.



In 1858 his new family and parents he migrated to Howard County, Iowa. After ten years his parents returned to Freeport. His father died in 1888, and his mother in 1887. In Iowa for twenty-three years Cary engaged in farming, real estate and the mercantile business.

At the age of fifty-six, an age when most men begin to curtail their activities, Cary came to Louisiana and soon developed the community of Jennings.

After an active and interesting life in Jennings, "Father" Cary died on January 21, 1915. His name and good works have lived long after his death. The names Jennings and Cary will always be synonymous.



## APPENDIX II

### Biographical Sketch of John H. Roberts

John H. Roberts was born in Pennsylvania in 1843. His mother came from Germany at the age of eight. John, one of eleven children, received the usual general education of the day.

At the age of seventeen he enlisted in the United States Army, serving throughout the Civil War in Company "K", 24th Ohio Volunteer Regiment. In the Battle of Stone River he received wounds which caused his retirement from combat service. He served the remainder of the war as a clerk in the office of the Adjutant General of Ohio. After the war he traveled extensively in the south.

In 1870 he married Minta Hearwood of Jefferson, Texas. His wife died in Biloxi, Mississippi, in 1886. After spending some time in the mercantile business in Georgia, he went to north Louisiana in 1882 for two years.

In 1884 he came to Jennings where he received employment as a clerk in A. D. McFarlain's store. In 1888 he married <sup>1</sup>rs. M. L. Evarts.

In Jennings he became an active member of a society for the first time. His leadership in civic affairs was soon apparent. He was a member of the Masons and was commandant of the Grand Army of the Republic.

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<sup>1</sup> Perrin, Southwest Louisiana, p. 190.





In 1888 he was elected mayor of the town and headed Jennings' first  
governmental body.<sup>2</sup> In 1889 he was appointed postmaster of the  
Jennings post Office.<sup>3</sup> In 1894 Roberts was again elected mayor.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ordinance Book, p.8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> List of Mayors, City Hall, Jennings, Louisiana.



### APPENDIX III

#### Biographical Sketch of A. D. McFarlain

A. D. McFarlain, one of four children, was born in St. Mary Parish, Louisiana, in 1853. His father, originally from Ireland, was reared and educated in Virginia and moved to Louisiana while still a young man. By a second marriage four more children were born to the elder McFarlain.

The boy A. D., having received a very limited education at home, went to work as a farm hand at the age of thirteen. After one year on the farm he became engaged in the saw mill industry and remained in this work for twelve years. In 1873 he married Margaret Humphries. He was the father of eight children. In 1881 he moved to Calcasieu parish and established a general store near the Jennings depot. By 1891 he was rated as one of Jennings' largest property owners. He owned fifteen resident houses, 400 city lots, and 4,000 acres of farm land. His business grossed \$20,000 a year. He became actively engaged in politics, serving four years as deputy sheriff and four years as town constable and one year as mayor.

Along with his other activities he was a large producer of rice and in this connection contributed to the development of the canal system which became a permanent feature of the rice industry. With the

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<sup>1</sup> Perrin, Southwest Louisiana, pp. 178-179; Photographs of past mayors in the City Hall, Jennings, Louisiana.





discovery of oil McFarlain became actively engaged in this new industry,  
owning and operating his own oil company.<sup>2</sup> McFarlain's business ability  
and civic interest immensely aided the growth of young Jennings.

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<sup>2</sup> Jennings Daily Record, November 2, 1901.



#### APPENDIX IV

##### Biographical Sketch of E. R. Shankland

E. R. Shankland was born in Lewis, Delaward, in 1819. Left an orphan at an early age, he was reared by a family friend in Philadelphia. He later worked on the Philadelphia-Pittsburg Canal for five years.

He served in the army under Colonel Zachery Taylor for two years, being actively engaged in the Seminole War. At the termination of his military career he settled in Iowa and entered in the seed and implement business. In the panic of 1857 he lost all he had accumulated. This accounted for his start in farming and horticulture. He was very successful in his new vocation, serving as president of the state agricultural society. He later served four as Deputy United States Marshall for the northern district of Iowa.

In all he married three times. The first time in 1839, the second in 1862, and in 1882 he married Olivia Hemstead, the daughter of an ex-governor of Iowa. By his first marriage he had five children.

In 1885 Shankland came to Jennings with other Iowans. He co-sponsored the first agricultural fair in Jennings, placing special emphasis on fruit. After becoming president of the Southwest Louisiana Horticultural Society, He represented his locality on several occasions at variour agricultural conferences in the parish and state.

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<sup>1</sup> Perrin, Southwest Louisiana, p. 192.



## APPENDIX V

### The Municipal Charter

city

#### Section I

The people of Jennings, Louisiana, declare themselves a body politic with the right to collect taxes, make laws, sue, and own property and carry on a local government.

d

#### Section II

Town Limits. Commencing at the northwest corner of the northeast quarter of northwest quarter Section 28, Township 9 South, Range 3 West, running thence east on Section Line three miles, thence south three and one quarter miles, thence west three miles, thence north three and one quarter miles to place of beginning.

disease.

be

#### Section III

The town shall have one mayor and five trustees elected by popular vote. All officials must be qualified electors.

#### Section IV

Any person qualified to vote for state officials according to state laws shall be qualified to vote for municipal officials. In addition he must have been a resident of Jennings for thirty days prior to any election.

#### Section V.

Election of city officials shall be held on the last Friday of each odd year beginning on December 26, 1889. Officials to serve two years.

icer

#### Section VI

Officials are to take oath as prescribed. Taxes will be assessed and collected in same manner as done by the state. In no event will tax rate exceed then mills on the dollar for any year.

its.

#### Section VII

Lien on taxable property for the city will be given second place to the state.

#### Section VIII

All businesses declared to be taxable.

il

#### Section IX

City assessment will be guided by the assessment roll kept by the Parish Tax Assessor.





## APPENDIX VI

### A Calendar of Selected Municipal Ordinances

1888

- 1 -- Appointed commissioners to hold an election for adoption of city Charter.
- 2 -- The charter was officially adopted as a result of the election.
- 3 -- Prohibited drinking in public, disorderly conduct, discharge of fire arms; playing dice, cards or any game of chance on the streets or in public, houses of ill repute, driving or riding horses or other animals at "furious" rate of speed through the streets, hitching of horses or mules on sidewalk, and horseracing. Failure to pay the fine for any offense committed resulted in having to work on the city streets at the rate of \$1.00 a day until the fine is worked out.
- 4 -- Prohibited sheep, goats and other livestock to roam the streets, The marshall was required to impound livestock caught at large. The owner was required to pay expenses. The marshall was required to keep a record of all brands.
- 5 -- Made it unlawful to obstruct sidewalk, street or ditch.
- 6 -- Tax assessment in way of license on all businesses.
- 7.-- Owners were required to move dead animals; if not done in six hours, the town marshall authorized to do so at owners expense.
- 8 -- Unlawful for trains to obstruct road crossing in Jennings for more than ten minutes.
- 9 -- Unlawful to take fruit or vegetables from anothers property.
- 10 -- Dogs must be licensed and collared.
- 11 -- Placed annual tax of ten mills on the dollar at assessed valuation of property.
- 12 -- Male citixens required to work on roads four days a year or pay \$1.50 per day to the city (four days).



- 13 -- Construction of wooden sidewalks required by abutting property owners within certain limits.
- 14 -- Unlawful to carry deadly weapons.
- 15 -- Unlawful to play ball in the streets. Unlawful to play ball in city limits on Sunday.
- 16 -- None but railroad employees can lawfully jump on or off railroad cars in motion.
- 17 -- Required construction of additional sidewalks.
- 18 -- Required construction of additional sidewalks.
- 19 -- Unlawful to have in corporate limits any animal suffering from disease.
- 20 -- Open privies, slop holes and other such unsightly objects must be removed from town.
- 21 -- Drinking houses will be closed at 11 P. M.
- 22 -- Unlawful to allow vicious animals to run at large.
- 23 -- Unlawful to disturb a peaceful assembly.
- 24 -- Prohibited cruelty to animals.
- 25 -- Prohibited removal of impounded animals.
- 26 -- Unlawful to use obscene or abusive language in addressing an officer carrying out his duty.

1889

- 27 -- Prohibited sale of intoxicating liquors within the corporate limits.
- 28 -- Provided punishment for vagrancy.
- 29 -- Special tax of two and one-half mills levied for eight years.
- 30 -- Required construction of additional sidewalks.
- 31 -- Required construction of additional sidewalks.
- 32 -- Special tax of two and one-half mills for teachers and. Special tax of five and one-half mills for general purpose.
- 33 -- Prohibited gambling or betting houses in city limits.





- 35 -- Unlawful for bull or stallion to run at large.
- 36 -- Town is make a school district. Provided for town school board of three members to be elected.
- 37 -- Saloons licensed.
- 38 -- Town marshall paid \$100 a year and fees of his office.
- 39 -- Changed tenure of office for school board members so that members are changed one at a time.
- 40 -- Street commissioner's office abolished; replaced by committee of streets. Street repairs to be done between April and September of each year.

#### 1890

- 46 -- Sale of intoxicating liquors prohibited.

#### 1892

- 56 -- Prohibited accumulation of garbage.
- 58 -- Repealed that part of Ordinance 3 which require those who failed to pay fines to work on the road.
- 59 -- Prohibited the playing of the game of "craps" in the city limits.
- 60 -- Established a board of health of three persons to be appointed by the mayor; one member must be a practicing physician. Board to have power to make rules and regulations.
- 63 -- Modified punishment for violation of gambling laws as outlined in Ordinance 34.

#### 1893

- 73 -- Allowed Messrs. Johnson and Perkins to install a telephone system in Jennings. Installation charge to be \$18.00; monthly rate \$2.00.
- 74 -- Granted a franchise to Postal-Telegraph-Cable Company to operate service in Jennings.

#### 1899

- 81 -- Granted a franchise to R. S. Stearns and associates to install and



operate an electric light and power plant. The city reserved the right to purchase the plant after one year on sixty day notice.<sup>1</sup>

82 -- Town curfew established.

#### 1900

84 -- Jennings elected to come under Act 136 of 1898 of Louisiana General Assembly.

86 -- Jennings' city ball club granted the right to play ball on Sunday.

87 -- Called for an election to authorize a municipal indebtedness of \$25,000 for water works. One hundred bonds of \$250 each at five per cent interest per annum to be issued. Special tax of five mills to pay for the bonds.

88 -- Special tax passed for school system.

92 -- Sale of liquor made legal.

#### 1901

95 -- Cumberland Telephone Company authorized to operate in Jennings; telephone in mayor's office to be free of charge.

96 -- Gambling made unlawful.

97 -- Storage of oil on ground surface unlawful.

98 -- Prohibited the sale of liquor.

100 -- Reaffirmed Ordinance 98.

102 -- Established fire limits and building restriction.

#### 1902

103 -- Proposed municipal ownership of a town hall and sewerage and water works system

104 -- Prohibited prostitution.

#### 1903

111 -- Saloons licensed.



114 -- Fixed water rates at fifty cents per faucet; except saloons, which were to be charged two dollars per faucet.

1904

120 -- Jennings Electric Light and Power Company authorized to do business.

1905

127 -- Called an election to authorize a municipal indebtedness of \$25,000 for construction of school building.

130 -- Prohibited gambling.

1906

133 -- Jennings Oil Company and Heywood Brothers granted right to construct, operate and maintain telephone and telegraph line.

1907

136 -- Prohibited skating on sidewalks.

137 -- In accepting the donation of \$10,000 for a new library building from Andrew Carnegie and the site from the Ladies Library Society, granted \$1,000 a year to support the library.

138 -- Established a nine member library board of trustees.

139 -- Set aside funds for the new school.

144 -- All gates were required to be hung so as not to hang over the sidewalk.

145 -- Prohibited spitting on sidewalk.

148 -- Repealed the curfew ordinance.

151 -- Established automobile regulations.

152 -- Expanded the police force and clarified its duties.

155 -- Prohibited cock fighting in the city limits.

158 -- Prohibited the placing of posters on poles, fences, etc.

159 -- Provided for punishment of vagrancy.





- 161 -- Standard weight for loaf of bread set at 14 ounces.
- 162 -- New contract with Jennings Electric Light and Power Company.
- 166 -- Prohibited the sale of intoxicating liquors.

1910

- 179 to 183, 185 to 187 -- Provided for the construction of concrete sidewalks and curbs.
- 184 -- Special tax of six mills voted for the public school.

1911

- 204 -- Prohibited the riding of bicycles on sidewalks.
- 208 -- Authorized ball playing on Sundays from 2:00 to 7:00 P. M.
- 211 -- Required all amles from twenty-one to fifty to work on streets not to exceed two days a year or in default to pay \$1.50 per day for two days a year.
- 214 -- Granted a franchise (not exclusive) to C. C. Johnson authorizing the establishment of an electric light system.

1912

- 222 -- Granted authority for the city to provide accommodations for the Police Jury.
- 225 -- Placed Jennings under Act 207 of the 1912 legislature, mayor-commissioner plan.
- 220 -- Automobile speed limit established as ten miles per hour in business districts and fifteen miles per hour elsewhere in city limits minimum driving age, eighteen.

1913

- 228 -- Authorized a special tax to provide a court house and furnishings.
- 231 -- Prohibited gambling.

1914

- 235 -- The use of slot machines and other similar mechanical devices declared illegal.



239 -- Granted license for the sale of malt liquors of not more than two per cent alcohol.

1915

242 -- Authorized a special tax for road improvements.

1917

256 -- Expanded the traffic regulations.

1918

262 -- Provided for additional street paving.

263 -- Condemned and ordered the destruction of the Mahaffey Hotel.

265 -- Provided penalties for anyone entering the aviation grounds. If a child under twelve violated the ordinance, the parents concerned suffered the penalty.

1919

268 -- Contracted with the Southwest Public Service Company for the street lights of Jennings.

1920

270 -- Authorized the mayor to procure one carload of war surplus subsistence stores to be sold in Jennings.

279 -- Required all movies and theatres to be closed on Sunday.\*

---

\*Ordinance Book, et passim.





# APPENDIX VIII

## Mayors of Jennings, Louisiana, 1888-1920<sup>1</sup>

John H. Roberts	- - - - -	-1888-1891
T. E. Wright	- - - - -	-1891-1893
J. M. Rowe	- - - - -	-1893-1894
John H. Roberts	- - - - -	-1894-1895
A. D. McFarlain	- - - - -	-1895-1896
E. F. Rowson	- - - - -	-1896-1897
P. M. Kokanour	- - - - -	-1897-1899
V. M. Twitchell	- - - - -	-1899-1901
D. E. Sweet	- - - - -	-1901- 1902
W. F. Humphrey	- - - - -	1902-1903
J. P. Black	- - - - -	-1903-1906
V. M. Twitchell	- - - - -	-1906-1908
George Hathaway	- - - - -	-1908-1910
H. K. Midkiffe	- - - - -	-1910-1911
V. M. Twitchell	- - - - -	-1911-1912
S. A. Sutter	- - - - -	-1912-1913
John Gamble	- - - - -	-1913-1916
A. F. Derouen	- - - - -	-1917-1929

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<sup>1</sup> Jennings Jeff Davis Parish News, October, 1936, Fair Edition; Photographs with dates in the City Hall, Jennings, Louisiana.



# APPENDIX VIII

## Number of Wells Drilled in Jennings Field <sup>1</sup>

<u>Year</u>	<u>Productive</u>	<u>Dry</u>	<u>Total</u>
1906	48	23	71
1907	53	23	76
1908	104	38	142
1909	28	23	51
- - -	- -	- -	- -
1913	19	9	28
1914	12	9	28
1915	16	6	22
1916	28	14	42
1917	25	13	38

<sup>1</sup> Computed from Mineral Resources, 1902-1920.

LAND USE MAP

JENNINGS

LAND USE MAP

JENNINGS













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## VITA

The writer was born on April 14, 1920, in Shreveport, Louisiana. He was graduated from Fair Park High School, Shreveport, Louisiana, June, 1937. He attended Louisiana State University from 1938 to November, 1940, at which time he entered the United States Army. After serving five and one half years, three of which were spent overseas, he entered Centenary College and received the B. A. degree in June, 1947. He is at present enrolled in Louisiana State University.





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